

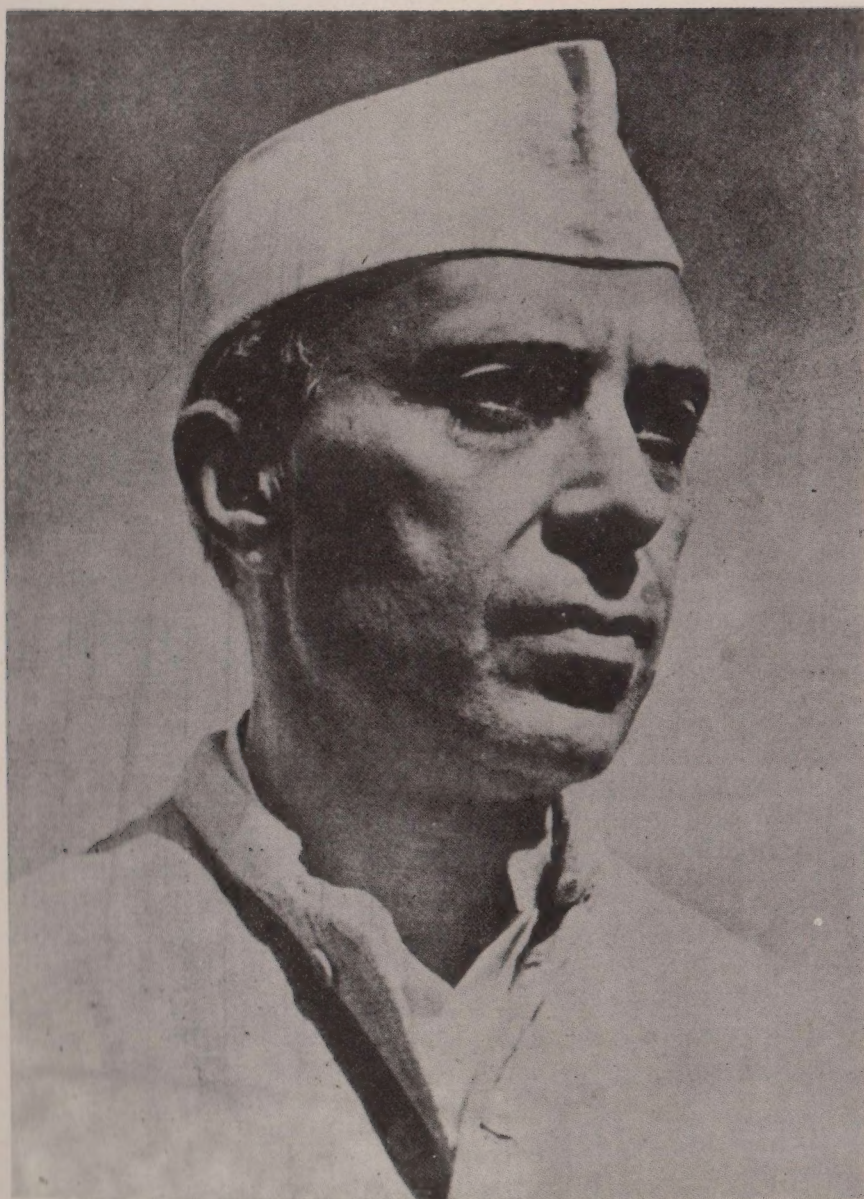
Selected works of Jawaharlal Nehru



13

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1945

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Volume Thirteen

A Project of the
Jawaharlal Nehru
Memorial Fund



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FOREWORD

General Editor

S. Gopal

FOREWORD

Jawaharlal Nehru is one of the key figures of the twentieth century. He symbolised some of the major forces which have transformed our age.

When Jawaharlal Nehru was young, history was still the privilege of the West; the rest of the world lay in deliberate darkness. The impression given was that the vast continents of Asia and Africa existed merely to sustain their masters in Europe and North America. Jawaharlal Nehru's own education in Britain could be interpreted, in a sense, as an attempt to secure for him a place within the pale. His letters of the time are evidence of his sensitivity, his interest in science and international affairs as well as of his pride in India and Asia. But his personality was veiled by his shyness and a facade of nonchalance, and perhaps outwardly there was not much to distinguish him from the ordinary run of men. Gradually there emerged the warm and universal being who became intensely involved with the problems of the poor and the oppressed in all lands. In doing so, Jawaharlal Nehru gave articulation and leadership to millions of people in his own country and in Asia and Africa.

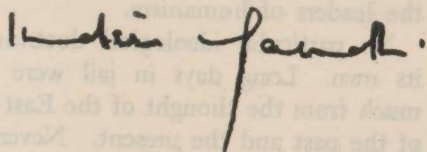
That imperialism was a curse which should be lifted from the brows of men, that poverty was incompatible with civilisation, that nationalism should be poised on a sense of international community and that it was not sufficient to brood on these things when action was urgent and compelling—these were the principles which inspired and gave vitality to Jawaharlal Nehru's activities in the years of India's struggle for freedom and made him not only an intense nationalist but one of the leaders of humanism.

No particular ideological doctrine could claim Jawaharlal Nehru for its own. Long days in jail were spent in reading widely. He drew much from the thought of the East and West and from the philosophies of the past and the present. Never religious in the formal sense, yet he had a deep love for the culture and tradition of his own land. Never a rigid Marxist, yet he was deeply influenced by that theory and was particularly impressed by what he saw in the Soviet Union on his first visit in 1927. However, he realised that the world was too complex, and man had too many facets, to be encompassed by any single or total explanation. He himself was a socialist with an abhorrence of regimentation and a democrat who was anxious to reconcile his faith in civil liberty with the necessity of mitigating economic and social wretchedness. His struggles, both within himself and with the outside world, to adjust

such seeming contradictions are what make his life and work significant and fascinating.

As a leader of free India, Jawaharlal Nehru recognised that his country could neither stay out of the world nor divest itself of its own interests in world affairs. But to the extent that it was possible, Jawaharlal Nehru sought to speak objectively and to be a voice of sanity in the shrill phases of the 'cold war'. Whether his influence helped on certain occasions to maintain peace is for the future historian to assess. What we do know is that for a long stretch of time he commanded an international audience reaching far beyond governments, that he spoke for ordinary, sensitive, thinking men and women around the globe and that his was a constituency which extended far beyond India.

So the story of Jawaharlal Nehru is that of a man who evolved, who grew in storm and stress till he became the representative of much that was noble in his time. It is the story of a generous and gracious human being who summed up in himself the resurgence of the 'third world' as well as the humanism which transcends dogmas and is adapted to the contemporary context. His achievement, by its very nature and setting, was much greater than that of a Prime Minister. And it is with the conviction that the life of this man is of importance not only to scholars but to all, in India and elsewhere, who are interested in the valour and compassion of the human spirit that the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund has decided to publish a series of volumes consisting of all that is significant in what Jawaharlal Nehru spoke and wrote. There is, as is to be expected in the speeches and writings of a man so engrossed in affairs and gifted with expression, much that is ephemeral; this will be omitted. The official letters and memoranda will also not find place here. But it is planned to include everything else and the whole corpus should help to remind us of the quality and endeavour of one who was not only a leader of men and a lover of mankind, but a completely integrated human being.



New Delhi
18 January 1972

Chairman
Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund

EDITORIAL NOTE

This volume covers the period of thirty four months from 9 August 1942 to 15 June 1945, when Jawaharlal was in prison. He and eleven other members of the Congress Working Committee were arrested in Bombay after the passage of the Quit India Resolution and interned in Ahmadnagar Fort. After two years and eight months, on 28 March 1945, Jawaharlal, Govind Ballabh Pant and Narendra Deva were moved to Bareilly Jail. Pant was released on 31 March 1945. After ten weeks at Bareilly, on 10 June, Jawaharlal and Narendra Deva were transferred to Almora Jail and released from there after five days.

This was the longest term of imprisonment served by Jawaharlal and his diaries and letters of these years reveal his changing moods of optimism as well as despair, and his thoughts on India's past, present and future. Thrown, for most of this period, in close proximity with political colleagues of various types and temperaments, he honestly reveals his reactions, his appreciation of their merits and talents as well as the occasional friction between them.

It was during these years of detention that Jawaharlal wrote *The Discovery of India*. As it has already been published as a separate volume, it has not been reprinted here. The copious extracts which he made from the books he read in prison have also not been included. The ten notebooks containing these notes are available in the Nehru Memorial Library. Some letters, found recently, which chronologically belong to earlier volumes have been included in the appendix.

Shrimati Indira Gandhi has made available to us Jawaharlal's diaries and letters. Shrimati Nayantara Sahgal has provided us with copies of two letters which Jawaharlal wrote to her. We are grateful to the Maharashtra Government for allowing us to use material in their possession and to the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* and *The Hindusthan Standard* for permission to reproduce two pictures showing the severity of the Bengal famine. The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, has authorized us to reprint an extract from *The Transfer of Power 1942-47*, Volume III, and the Public Record Office, London, has permitted the publication of a letter to Sir Stafford Cripps which is in the British Cabinet papers. We thank the staff of the Nehru Memorial Library for their cooperation. The English translation of the Urdu passages has been undertaken by Dr. Mohammed Zakir, Reader, Department of Urdu, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi.

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PRISON DIARY WITH LETTERS

9 August 1942—15 June 1945

NINTH IMPRISONMENT¹

September 10, 1942 Thursday.

A month and a day we have been here in an internment camp in Ahmadnagar Fort.² Twelve of us: Maulana, Vallabhbhai, Govind Ballabh Pant, Mahmud, Kripalani, Shankar Rao Deo, Profulla Ghose,³ Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Asaf Ali, Narendra Deva, Harekrushna Mahtab, and I—ten of us members of the Working Committee and two invitees⁴ to it. During this period I have often thought of starting a journal, as has been my habit in prison. But the days have gone by and I have not felt any special urge to write. Even today I was not anxious to do so but the lack of books to read or any other regular work has at last driven me to this notebook. Perhaps some notes of events and of the passing moods of the introspective life in prison, may have some value in later days.

For many years past I had got used to a more or less solitary existence in prison. I was either by myself or had one companion. Now I have eleven of them and that seems quite a crowd. This leads to many common services and time is spent in talks, games &c. Thus there is not as much time available for quiet reading or like work as I used to have.

1. In this volume the diaries kept by Jawaharlal in the Ahmadnagar Fort prison from 9 August 1942 to 28 March 1945, in the Bareilly Central Prison from 30 March to 9 June 1945 and in the Almora Jail from 10 June till 15 June 1945 are printed with the omission of some repetitions and personal comments. His letters written during this period have been interspersed. The diaries and the letters to Indira Gandhi are available in N.M.M.L. The letters to Krishna Hutheesing have been printed in *Nehru's Letters to His Sister* (Faber and Faber, London, 1963).
2. Ahmadnagar Fort was a 16th century Mughal fortress which the British had used for detaining prisoners of war because it offered maximum security.
3. Prafulla Chandra Ghose (b. 1891); arrested for participation in freedom struggle, 1930, 1932, 1940, 1942-44; Chief Minister of West Bengal, 1947-48; Minister of United Front Government, 1967; later Chief Minister in a coalition, from November 1967 till February 1968.
4. Acharya Narendra Deva and Hare Krushna Mahtab.

To go back.

The A.I.C.C. meeting in Bombay on the 7th & 8th August. Busy days, and yet the burden of having to decide was cast aside and I felt lighter.⁵ The Working Committee resolution for the A.I.C.C. had been issued. The decision had been made and I was well satisfied with it. The resolution was good; I liked it. The operative part of the decision, authorising Gandhiji to start mass C.D., was inevitable and the course of recent events had led us to it by an inexorable logic. There was no escape from it, nor did I want to escape. More and more I had felt that passivity was injurious to our cause, as well as, ultimately, to the cause of China, U.S.S.R. &c. Possibly this conviction was due to an attempt to rationalize conflicting trends in my mind. I had long been troubled and distressed at the thought that we might do something which might mean breaking faith with China. This was intolerable to me, and again and again I had said so in W.C. and elsewhere. On the other hand, the Indian position and outlook demanded some action. There was the impasse: how to act and yet not to injure in any way China's effort &c. The rationalizing process started. It became clearer to me that this war cannot lead to right results so long as the whole conception behind it does not change. It must in effect be thought of in revolutionary terms, and, so far as Asiatic & African countries are concerned, must now lead to the ending of the imperial idea & tradition. India becomes the touchstone and the acid test. A free, independent India makes a vast difference, not only to us in India, but to the whole conception of European or American domination & superiority. Obviously the *post bellum* condition becomes entirely different from the *status quo*. Every Asiatic nation, including China, benefits tremendously. There is a clear line of demarcation between the free nations and the Axis imperialist powers—& so on.

It is clear that England certainly, and possibly America, are not yet prepared to accept such a revolutionary change. They even prefer to endanger & weaken their positions in this war, rather than accept this notion. Hence the difficulty.

There is no way out for us except to challenge this position and face the consequences. What will be the consequences? No one knows.....

5. The resolution of the All India Congress Committee of 8 August 1942 had authorised Mahatma Gandhi to launch a struggle if all attempts to arrive at an honourable settlement failed. Mahatma Gandhi had declared that he would take the earliest opportunity to seek an interview with the Viceroy towards that end. For the A.I.C.C. resolution see *Selected Works*, Vol. 12, pp. 437-453.

The argumentative part of the resolution seemed to me unanswerable.⁶ My only regret was that we had not put it forward in this way previously. Our previous efforts were not so clear and Gandhiji's articles,⁷ firm and powerful as they were, always led to confusion and misunderstanding. All British propaganda⁸ was largely based on Bapu's articles & statements; it carefully avoided the resolution of the W.C., which defined & laid down Congress policy authoritatively.

I was glad especially at the inclusion of the world federation idea in our resolution.⁹ This was due to Maurice Friedman.¹⁰ Also the reference to the freedom of the countries now occupied by Japan or Britain &c in Asia—Burma, Indonesia, Iran &c.¹¹

So I faced the A.I.C.C. with a light heart, if one can have a light heart on such an occasion. I was rather long-winded, and yet missed out some important points which I had especially noted in my mind.¹²

Throughout our stay in Bombay there were vague rumours of our impending arrest. It was obvious that this was coming—but when & where? I was inclined to think that we would be arrested on our way back.

And so the A.I.C.C. was over, rather late in the evening. We had a late dinner at Raja's flat and I went to bed a little before midnight.

6. It contended that a people who did not feel themselves free could not be expected to fight in a war for freedom; nor could they be aroused against aggressors except by a genuinely representative government.

7. In his articles in *Harijan* and statements to the press between April and June 1942, Mahatma Gandhi called for an orderly and timely British withdrawal in which case Japan would leave India alone, having had the 'bait' for invasion removed; even if there were to be an invasion India would offer nonviolent resistance to Japan and noncooperation with British authorities though the step might lead to "anarchy". Later he amended them to recognise that he would allow Allied troops to operate from India against the Axis powers.

8. The Government carried on a propaganda that Mahatma Gandhi and the majority of Congress leaders were confident of an Axis victory.

9. "... the future peace, security and ordered progress of the world demand a world federation of free nations and on no other basis can the problem of the modern world be solved. Such a world federation would ensure the freedom of its constituent nations, the prevention of aggression and exploitation by one nation over another, the protection of national minorities, the advancement of all backward areas and peoples, and the pooling of the world's resources for the common good of all."

10. Polish engineer who became a Hindu and was known as Swami Bharatananda.

11. "The freedom of India must be the symbol of, and prelude to, this freedom of all Asiatic nations under foreign domination. Burma, Malaya, Indo-China, the Dutch Indies, Iran and Iraq must also attain their complete freedom."

12. For Jawaharlal's speech at the A.I.C.C. see *Selected Works*, Vol. 12, pp. 457-461.

Raja and Betty had made room for their guests and were staying next door with Chinni.¹³ Indu & Feroze were in Betty's room.

August 9th—5.15 a.m. Indu comes into my room and wakes me: "The police have come." So that's that. The invitation has come—not much of an invitation. I was sound asleep but I became wide-awake immediately. What was I to do? We were not going to follow the old procedure, we had said often enough.¹⁴ Should I submit to this jail going quietly or refuse to go? Refusal would ultimately lead to being carried out—an undignified exit. Violent resistance was out of the question. So I thought rapidly—meanwhile, anyway, I might as well shave and have a bath. I proceeded to do so in a leisurely way.

This same thought, of whether to submit to arrest or not, had struck many others also that morning. Pant refused to get up so early and had another two hours' sleep. He could not easily be moved! And so he and his companion Mahtab were left behind that day and did not accompany the others.¹⁵

But gradually and automatically the decision was taken to accompany the policemen in the usual way. Old habit prevailed and there appeared to be no other suitable alternative. As I got ready Indu threw some clothes &c. in my suitcase and made up my bedding. Upadhyaya was not there as he lived elsewhere.

Raja and Betty turned up and Raja discovered that there was a warrant for him also. So more packing &c.

I wrote a letter¹⁶ to my bank authorising Indu to draw upon my account. After an hour or so we were ready and had some tea. I went to the sitting room then and saw the police sergeant for the first time and read the warrant for my arrest. It was an order for detention under the Defence of India Rules.¹⁷ Raja's warrant specified Yeravda prison. Mine was silent about the destination.

13. C.R. Sundaram, son of C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyar.

14. At the Congress Working Committee meeting at Wardha on 5-7 July 1942, Mahatma Gandhi had advised that unlike on previous occasions Congressmen should not court arrest voluntarily. They should resist and surrender only to physical force.

15. Pant and Mahtab were detained for the day in a Bombay prison and driven to Ahmadnagar by car the next day.

16. Not printed.

17. To avoid trials the Congress leaders were detained under Section 26(i)(b) of the Defence of India Act which empowered the Central Government to detain any particular person if it was necessary to do so "with a view to preventing him from acting in any manner prejudicial to the defence of British India, the public safety, the maintenance of public order, relations with foreign or Indian States, or the efficient prosecution of the war."

And so goodbye to Indu & Betty & Feroze and Chinni & Harsha & Ajit. Raja and I were taken in separate taxis and we drove through Bombay in the cool of the early morning as the great city was waking up.

When would we meet again I wondered. When would I see Indu again? What was going to happen in Bombay and elsewhere that day and on the following days and weeks and months? What of Bapu and others? That morning I was to have unfurled the National Flag at the Congress *pandal* and later to have addressed the students there. Immediately after there was to have been a workers' meeting at Birla House to be addressed by Bapu. Then the Working Committee. In the evening I was to have addressed a public meeting in Shivaji Park.

What was going to happen? What secrets lay behind the veil of the future?

As we approached Victoria Terminus. There seemed to be no stir yet anywhere, no excitement visible. Of course, the people did not know or very few knew. It was a Sunday. Would everything pass off as a damp squib?

Near the station I saw Ram Manohar Lohia¹⁸ on the pavement. He saw me and we waved to each other. Evidently he knew.

Inside the station a special train was standing and plenty of police and a number of English officials. There was a big haul. Soon I found that Bapu was in the train with Mahadev & Mira. In another compartment were Maulana, Asaf Ali & Mahmud. Also Sarojini, Vallabhbhai and other members of the W.C. And a number of Bombay Congress leaders : B.G. Kher, Morarji,¹⁹ Yusuf Meherally and

18. Soon after Lohia went underground and eluded the police till he was arrested on 20 May 1944.

19. Morarji Desai (b. 1896); joined Provincial Civil Service, Government of Bombay, 1918; resigned and participated in freedom struggle from 1930; in jail, 1930-34, 1940-41 and 1942-45; Minister for Revenue, 1937-39, for Home and Revenue, 1946-52 and Chief Minister, 1952-56, in the Government of Bombay; Union Minister for Commerce and Industry, 1956-58; and for Finance, 1958-63; resigned from the Government in 1963 to work for Congress organisation; Chairman, Administrative Reforms Commission, 1966-67; Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, 1967-69; Chairman, Congress Parliamentary Party (Organisation), 1969-77; detained during Emergency, June 1975-January 1977; first Chairman, Janata Party, 1977; Prime Minister of India, March 1977-July 1979; author of *A View of the Gita*, *In My View*; *A Minister and His Responsibilities*, *Book on Nature Cure* and *The Story of My Life* (3 Vols.).

many others. Maniben²⁰ also but Ba was not there.²¹ Noori²² had been roped in.

Outside, on the platform, stood Aruna and Ajmal Khan. They had not been arrested and had been allowed to come to the station. It struck me that I might have brought Indu to the station.

Others arrived and were bundled into the train. Something appeared to be wrong as the police officers & others were continually looking at their watches. They were waiting for somebody who had not so far turned up. This, it turned out later, was Govind Ballabh Pant, who had refused to get up when the police came for him.

The train left at last at 7 a.m. without Pant, through the suburbs of Bombay to Kalyan, hardly stopping, and on towards Poona. Where were we going to? Some certainly to Yeravda.

We had breakfast in a restaurant car attached! We got to know that Bapu and many others were going to be taken down somewhere before Poona, while the W.C. members would continue their journey to some further destination.

A few of us—Maulana, Vallabhbhai, Kher & I—went to Bapu's compartment for a final meeting and asked him some questions. What of the future? So far as outside activities were concerned, no such question arose as we were cut off from them, or at any rate were likely to be cut off. What we were concerned with was Bapu and his threatened fast unto death.²³ He told us that he had not given up the idea, but he would not rush into it and would give some time to the situation to develop. Certainly there would be no such step for two or three weeks or so. He insisted that Govt. must give him certain facilities to keep in touch with the outside world. It was not quite clear to me what he wanted, but apparently it had to do with writing work.

20. Maniben Patel (b. 1903); jailed for participation in freedom struggle, 1930, 1932–34, 1938–39, 1940 and 1942–45; member, Gujarat PCC and AICC since 1951; Trustee, Navjivan Trust since 1951; member, Lok Sabha, 1952–62, and Rajya Sabha, 1964–70.

21. Immediately after Mahatma Gandhi was arrested, Kasturba was asked by the authorities for an assurance that she would not participate in the political movement. She said that she had to give Mahatma Gandhi's message at the Shivaji Park meeting which had been announced the day before. She was taken into custody, and kept in the Arthur, Road prison in Bombay for two days. She, Pyarelal and Sushila Nayar joined Mahatma Gandhi in the Aga Khan Palace on 11 August 1942.

22. Mohamed Yasseen Nurie (1895–1967); Minister, Government of Bombay, 1937–39.

23. Mahatma Gandhi had often said and written that he would not touch food while in custody.

It seemed rather odd that he should expect this facility which partly nullified the object of internment, which was to isolate him. He told the Maulana also that he should insist on having his secretary with him.²⁴

We bade good-bye to him and returned to our respective compartments.

Two or three stations before Poona we stopped and Bapu & Party, including Sarojini were taken off. At the same place, but separately, the Bombay group was taken off.²⁵ The two parties were sent in different cars and lorries. Our train moved off.

At Poona there was an unexpected stop, unexpected by the policemen in the train, who were headed by a D.I.G. They were rather put out by this, fearing some demonstration, and were anxious to push on ahead. About 20 or 30 young men were on the station bridge. They came down towards our train just to have a closer look. There was a hou-ha and policemen rushed at them and I saw the police lathis or batons being used. I grew excited and angry, and tried to go out on the platform through the ordinary entrance. I was stopped by an Indian police officer and there was some pushing to & fro. I rushed back to my compartment and jumped out of the window. I ran towards the group of policemen pushing & batoning the young men, who had retired or even run away in an unseemly manner. It was this that had really annoyed me.

I was immediately surrounded by the police officers and others, and there was a good deal of wrestling! Half-a-dozen men found it difficult to hold me. Ultimately, having expressed myself forcibly about the British Govt. & the police, I came back to the train. I found later that Shanker Rao had also rushed out soon after me and had been bodily carried back.

So we ten reached Ahmadnagar and were brought to the Fort. And here we have been since then. Some barracks had been converted for our use. Large rooms separated by wooden partitions. Dak bungalow type of furnishing—very cheerless and uncomfortable looking. All the

24. The following was recorded by Mahadev Desai in his journal about this meeting: "In the course of a conversation with Maulana and Jawahar a reference came up as to fast. They recognised it as a final step. Jawahar raised the point as to why secrecy was incompatible with *ahimsa*. 'You are free to interpret *ahimsa* in your own way replied Bapu.'" (*Harijan*, 18 August 1946, p. 274.)

25. They were detained at Chinchwad, about 10 miles from Poona, to be interned in the Aga Khan Palace. Forty Congress leaders of Bombay were taken in lorries to the Yeravada Central Prison.

large windows at the back of the rooms bricked up to prevent us looking out of our little world. This meant a semi-darkness and lack of ventilation, electric lights & fans.

A jailer from Yeravda (named Kulkarni)²⁶ was here to look after us—so also a number of convict prisoners from Yeravda and warders.

We spread out and took possession of the rooms. Maulana's room & mine divided by a wooden partition about 7ft high. So we talk over it.

Food and sanitary arrangements highly unsatisfactory.

Gradually we discovered that there were going to be no newspapers, no letters, no interviews—indeed no communication of any kind between us and the outside world—our being kept in Ahmadnagar Fort itself a secret.

So we lived for nearly three weeks with no news of what was happening elsewhere. Gradually some order was evolved in our lives. The sanitary arrangements were improved and food, none too good, became passable. We divided various duties of supervision &c. amongst ourselves.

After a few days a Superintendent was stationed here as the Jailer was not thought safe enough or competent enough. This was Major M. Sendak (or some such name) I.M.S.—an odd kind of man.

The jailer & the warders lived in our enclosure, prisoners almost like us. They were not expected to go out except very rarely. And when they went out or came in, they were also—including the Jailer—closely searched.

The Supdt. lived somewhere outside but spent the greater part of the day here, more or less imprisoned! We were hermetically sealed. The only odd piece of news that casually reached us was that of a hartal²⁷ in Ahmadnagar, because we could not get our usual stuff from the bazar.

We fretted of course and each one of us reacted according to his temperament. Several times we gathered together and talked & talked as to what we should do. Shanker Rao was inclined to indulge in a hunger-strike—not because of the denial of facilities to us, but for the more basic reason of not tolerating prison itself and preferring death to it. No other person prepared to go thus far, and many of us wholly opposed to the idea of a hunger strike.

Some wanted a limited fast for some days as a kind of forcible protest. This too talked out.

26. Y.H. Kulkarni, later Superintendent, Belgaum Central Prison, 1949–52.

27. On 9 September 1942.

Bhandari²⁸ the I.G. came and offered to get clothes & books for us from our homes if we gave him a slip giving particulars. We could not write direct. Also he said we could buy books through him or the Superintendent. At first we were inclined to accept this suggestion and Maulana even sent him a list of books & papers which he wanted from his home. Later we decided not to take advantage of this offer. Either we should communicate directly with our people or not at all. So a formal letter was sent by Maulana to the I.G. on this subject.²⁹

But about the purchase of books through Govt., we decided to take advantage of the offer. A few days later I sent a long list of about 75 books to the Supt. They were chiefly from the Everyman's Library, the only list I had. This was forwarded to Govt. by the Supt. three weeks ago. There has been no answer so far and no books.

I had three books with me when I came! Plato's *Republic*, Proust's³⁰ and Lin Yutang's *With Love and Irony*.³¹ In a slow & leisurely way I read through Plato again. There were some other books also—with Kripalani chiefly. We have more or less exhausted all of them.

Towards the end of the month we were told that we could get newspapers out of the official approved list.³² Also that we could write home, to our relatives only, through Govt. But we must not mention where we were.

It is a fortnight now since this 'privilege' was accorded to us but I have not felt in the mood to write. It was difficult to know who to write to, for the list of those in prison must be an extensive one.

Newspapers—*The Times of India* & *The Bombay Chronicle*—began coming. But not the back numbers. So we had to guess what had happened during the previous two & a half months.

On the 4th Sept. I got a letter from Betty dated 28th August. From this I gathered that Indu was still at large and living in Anand Bhawan.

28. Dr. M.G. Bhandari, Inspector-General of Prisons, Government of Bombay, 1940-48; Surgeon-General, 1948-50.

29. On 25 August 1942, Abul Kalam Azad wrote to the Government that while even convicted criminals were allowed to correspond with their near relatives, the Congress leaders in the Ahmadnagar Fort detention camp were denied this right. On 10 September orders were received that they could correspond once a week with a near relative.

30. Marcel Proust, *A la recherche du temps perdu* (*Remembrance of Things Past*).

31. It is a story based on the Sino-Japanese war and the growth of the spirit of resistance in China.

32. From 27 August 1942 newspapers were allowed as the Government thought that knowledge of what the August Resolution had caused might bring about a change of heart.

Nan & Ranjit, it was clear, had been arrested.³³ Presumably Feroze also, though I have had no news of him so far.

Betty also wrote that she was forwarding to me a suitcase of clothes & books received from Anand Bhawan—also Rs. 50/-. Neither the suitcase nor the money has reached me although it is just two weeks since they were handed over to some Govt. office in Bombay.

Sept. 11th Friday

Bhandari the I.G. came today. Gave us the welcome news that our windows will be opened, partially at least. Also he promised to hurry up the dispatches of books ordered by us. I gave him a copy of the list sent three weeks ago to Govt.

This afternoon my suitcase arrived—clothes and some welcome books.

Sept. 12, Saturday

I was thinking of writing to Indu. Today's paper, however, brought news of her arrest, as also of Feroze's, in Allahabad.³⁴ So that's that. I was a little surprised to find that Feroze had survived for so long.

Churchill's speech also in today's paper.³⁵ Straight from the shoulder. Offensive to the Congress—after his usual style. Minorities &c., &c. On the whole I am pleased. Let there be no compromise. There can be none and it is about time that people realised it.

33. Vijayalakshmi Pandit was arrested on 13 August and Ranjit Pandit on 19 September 1942.

34. On 11 September 1942, Indira Gandhi was arrested for having convened a women's meeting. On the same day Feroze Gandhi was arrested and sentenced to a year's imprisonment.

35. In the House of Commons, Churchill alleged that the August disturbances, which had been checked within a month by repressive measures, were a deliberate Congress plan to help the Japanese. He claimed that the Congress was a party "which does not even represent the Hindu masses. It is a political organisation built around a party machine and sustained by certain manufacturing and financial interests. Outside that party and fundamentally opposed to it, are 90 million Muslims in British India who have their rights of self-determination, 50 million depressed classes or untouchables, as they are called, and 95 million subjects of the Princes of India with whom we are bound by treaty."

Sept. 17th.

On the 15th evening I received a letter from Indu from Allahabad dated 4th Sept.—written before her arrest of course. I was happy to get & happier still to read it and find that she was carrying on cheerfully. Chand was with her mother, she wrote, which meant that she too was in jail.³⁶

Yesterday a bunch of old papers—*The Times of India*—were given to us from the 10th August onwards. The whole day was spent in reading them and they produced a curious jumble of impressions. Everything was mixed up in my mind and the order of events was in a jumble. There was not much in the nature of surprise—no major event—as subsequent newspapers, which we had already read, had given us a fair notion of previous happenings. There had been more excitement on the 28th August when a newspaper came for the first time after 19 days. Suddenly a window had been opened from the dark cell of our minds and a blaze of light from the outside world had come in. It was a little blinding and the mind was unsettled. Varying reactions on us. Something had happened which we were sorry for. But on the whole there was a sense of satisfaction that there had been an upheaval following our arrests, even though it led to violent deeds. Evidently students had played a prominent part,³⁷ and also the peasantry in Bihar, U.P. & Madras.³⁸ Shooting & firing by the police & military on hundreds of occasions, and teargas bombs.

Side by side with these was the normal nonviolent satyagraha. And yet inevitably this latter was in the shade and hardly reported. It seemed that the age of more or less pure nonviolent satyagraha was over and violent mob outbursts were taking its place. Was this an inevitable & natural development? What of the future?

36. Chandralekha Pandit was arrested on 20 August 1942.

37. Students took the initiative in the early stages of the August movement, leading processions, overturning cars and buses, and forcing shopkeepers to close their stores. Lathi charges and firings, with which the Government answered these demonstrations, resulted in deaths of many students and injuring a greater number.

38. Everywhere the villagers formed marching parties to the court and Government buildings where they hoisted national flags. They raided police stations, cut telegraph wires, removed rails and fishplates, set fire to railway godowns and post offices, and destroyed small bridges.

The reports in the papers we get are heavily censored and it is clear that a great deal does not appear at all.³⁹ It is obvious also that what has happened has been on an extensive scale and far beyond what was expected by the Govt. Also that this continues although the more violent manifestations are gradually subsiding.

Ahmedabad labour has done well.⁴⁰ Mills closed now for five weeks.

The curious way news comes to us. There is no reference in any paper to the arrest of Nan & Ranjit. Yet the fact that neither was in Anand Bhawan when it was searched by the police—and the warrant was issued in the name of Chand—led me to think that both had been arrested. Then I saw a small item of news: a resolution of a branch of the Women's Conference—protesting against Nan's arrest.

We learnt of Mahadev's death also indirectly through a comment in the *Times*.⁴¹ It was a great shock to all of us and I remembered our last meeting in the train on Aug. 9th. He was to die only five days later.

Govt. have made much of some circular⁴² issued by the Andhra P.C.C. What a stupid & wrong circular! Pattabhi was not exactly responsible for it but it appears that he was the unwitting cause of it. He has a remarkable way of saying things which leave a confused impression on the mind of the hearer. Some such talk of his to the Andhra P.C.C. evidently led the latter to wrong & unjustified conclusions. Pattabhi was not too popular in our little circle here when this news appeared in the press.

X

X

X

X

39. The Government of India, on 8 August 1942, enforced DIR AI (1) (b) which prohibited the printing or publishing of news about the Congress movement or measures taken by the Government against the movement except the news from the prescribed agencies and official sources. The immediate result of this order was that about 30 newspapers closed down, some for a week as a protest, and others because of the feeling that they could not continue under the new restrictions.
40. The mills in Ahmedabad remained closed for two months after 9 August 1942. Firing with minor casualties resulted on two occasions when attempts were made with police help to reopen the mills.
41. Mahadev Desai died of a heart attack on 15 August 1942 in the Aga Khan palace. The news was incidentally referred to in a leader in *The Times of India* under the caption, "The Nazi propaganda and Mr. Desai."
42. This circular, issued on 28 July 1942, called for the cutting of communication wires but warned that "rails should not be removed or permanent way obstructed; danger of life should not be caused, all acts must be nonviolent and overt." Still the Secretary of State and the Government of India cited it as evidence for their charge that the August disturbances were premeditated.

I have no particular reason not to write letters now. So I suppose I had better write to Betty & Indu. But Indu is herself in jail and I do not know whether my letter will reach her.

Sept. 18, Friday.

Wrote to Indu and Betty.

Later: Received letters dt. Sept. 9th from Indu and letter dated 12/9 from Betty. Indu's letter was a brief one from Allahabad written obviously the day before her arrest.

I added a few lines in my letters to Indu & Betty acknowledging receipt of their letters.

Somewhere in India
but not at Anand Bhawan, Allahabad
September 18, 1942

Darling Indu,

It is now a month and nine days since I said goodbye to you and came here and for the first time I am writing a letter. About three weeks ago we were told that we could write letters subject to a number of restrictions and limitations. Yet I have not written all this time to anyone much as I would have liked to write to you. But being somewhat perverse by nature I did not take kindly to these restrictions and I postponed writing till I felt in a better mood for it. I thought I had better wait till I received a letter. The tortuous procedure of sending letters meant delay and was no incentive to writing. I was confirmed in my reluctance when I found how long it took for other people's letters to reach their destinations, if they reached them at all. I wondered afresh at the amazing dilatoriness and inefficiency of the governmental machinery of this country.

On the 4th September I received a letter from Betty—my first letter here. Also some clothes and books. Much later came the suitcase, containing clothes and books, which you had sent from Allahabad. And then on the 15th September came your letter of the 4th—an absurdly long interval of time between despatch and receipt. The desire to write to you grew and grew within me and has now overcome my reluctance to face these irritating delays and incompetence. So here is the letter which will go off from here today. When you will receive it, or whether you will receive it at all, is another matter.

I was very happy to get your letter and to know that you were well and flourishing. Yet I was not anxious about you for I knew well that you could and would look after yourself and face cheerfully whatever happened. Nevertheless to be assured of all this was very pleasing and I felt lighter in mind and body.

As for myself, there is little to say. You know that I can manage to fit in almost anywhere and keep my body and mind in active condition. One of my numerous failings is that I expect others to do so also and when they do not keep up to the mark, I become a nuisance to them. I have tried hard to overcome this weakness but the passing of years does not seem to make much difference. Here I have Mahmud especially to look after, with all his ailments, and I am not sure whether he enjoys all my ministrations and good advice which he receives in great abundance. So also others in a lesser degree.

I was very sorry to learn of poor Tangle's death. Yet it had to be as he was old and feeble. Rita⁴³ must have felt this most.

I have enough clothes and other necessities for the time being. Possibly I might require a blanket or two or one or two other things with the coming of winter. I am writing to Betty about them and she will, I suppose, communicate with Upadhyaya or Hari or whoever is available. Even if these articles do not reach me, it will not make much difference. I can carry on without them.

As for books, of course, they are always welcome. When I came here I had three with me: Plato's *Republic*, Marcel Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu* (2 vols) and Lin Yutang's *With Love and Irony*—an odd mixture. I read through Plato again in a leisurely way, allowing myself to absorb him as far as I could and adding to my admiration for him. Proust seemed to belong to some other and far-away world, or like faint memories of a vanishing age. And yet he wrote these books after I had left Cambridge. How this world of ours has changed and is changing!

There were some other books with my companions and I read them perforce because there were none better available. Then came a few odd books sent by Betty and later your little collection. So I have carried on. I have tried to purchase through Government a fairly large number of books but this is a frightfully slow process. I ordered them

43. Daughter of Vijayalakshmi Pandit and wife of Avtar Dhar of the Indian Foreign Service.

three or four weeks ago. I still live in hope and expectation. Perhaps in the course of another few weeks or months, they might turn up.

Betty wrote to me that new books were difficult to get. As a matter of fact I am not keen on new books, unless they are very special ones. Most of these new books are just trash in spite of their attractive bindings and publishers' blurbs. When I look at the books I have purchased during the last dozen years or more, there are exceedingly few which are at all worthwhile. In prison I go back almost automatically to good old classical literature. And so the books I have recently ordered are very largely taken from Everyman's Library. Partly because that is the only list I had.

I wonder what is happening to such foreign papers as manage to reach Anand Bhawan. I do not want them to be forwarded to me. I would much rather that they went to you and Nan.

Maulana is an extraordinarily interesting companion. The more I know him, and I have known him now for over 21 years, the more I find in him. I wish I could profit more by this enforced companionship. Meanwhile, I am having a peep into Urdu poetry. He tells me, or rather writes for me, a verse or two daily.

There is one small matter which has been in my mind for some time. I presume market prices have risen and are rising from day to day. This must affect our servants greatly. They were being given some kind of extra allowance but in view of the rise in prices, this cannot go far. I want them to be treated fairly and generously in this matter. It is better to err on the side of generosity. I am writing to Betty about this matter so that she can communicate with Ladli Bhai.

I was glad to learn from your letter that a Chinese governess had been engaged for the girls. The Chinese are good at this job and, besides, I like all contacts with the Chinese people.

How does one spend one's time in prison? The ignorant wonder. There is reading and writing of course. But apart from this there are innumerable other activities which are fascinating. I remember spending long hours in Dehra Dun watching ants and wasps and various insects. It was not a cold-blooded scientific survey but a human, friendly companionship, and I grew quite fond of them. Here, on a very ordinary patch of wild grass and dried up ground within our prison yard with a few pebbles lying about, we have discovered an amazing collection of fine stones of all manner of colours. Asaf Ali is particularly expert at this game. We are building up almost a museum of these.

And then there is the sky and frequently the rainbow spans it. Although we live in a kind of Plato's cave,⁴⁴ yet we have this sky over our yard and a lovely sky it is with fleecy and colourful clouds in the daytime, and, now, brilliant star-lit nights. What a fascinating world this is if only we kept our eyes and ears open.

As is my habit in prison, I get up very early, even before the dawn. I make up for this short night of sleep by sleeping a little in the afternoon. Yesterday I was tired and fell off into a deep sleep for an hour or so. I had an odd dream, one of the oddest I have ever had. Some time, perhaps, I might tell you about it, if I remember about it then. It was dramatic with a climax developing step by step till I grew faint with excitement and then, at the very moment of the last and final climax there was a sudden anti-climax. All the accumulated strain vanished and I felt a little limp. And I laughed. Just then I woke up!

There is some new-fangled time⁴⁵ abroad we are told, a trick to save daylight. We see no reason to abide by it and so we carry on with the old time.

I am a little anxious about Mehr Tej.⁴⁶ I hope all is well with her.

I do not know where you are, but wherever you may be I hope it is well with you, my dear. Keep bright and fit, for there is much to be done and we have to be in perfect condition to do it. Send my love to Feroze. Perhaps you are with Nan and Chand. If so give my love to them.

And so, *au revoir, carissima*, and all my love.

Your loving
Papu

Do not worry if you do not hear from me frequently or regularly.

Later: I have just received through Betty your note of the 9th written just on the eve of your departure. Good to see your handwriting again.

Love,

Papu

44. This is an allusion to Plato's allegory by which he explains his philosophy of knowledge: "Man takes shadows for realities." In an underground den or cave human beings have been living from childhood, having their necks and legs chained and cannot see what is happening outside the den. The mouth of the den overlooks a huge fire representing knowledge.

45. From 1 September 1942, a new standard time, one hour in advance of the old, was introduced by the Government as a military measure.

46. Daughter of Abdul Ghaffar Khan.

Somewhere in India
but not at Anand Bhawan, Allahabad,
18.9.42

Betty darling,

Your letter reached me just two weeks ago. It took a mighty long time to reach me for it was dated August 28th.

Somewhat irritated at this inefficiency and not taking kindly to the various restrictions and processes which are the accompaniment of the letter writing here, I have so far written no letters. Three days ago I had a letter from Indu which also loitered on the way and took its own time to reach me. I have now decided to overcome my reluctance and write letters, at any rate, today, for the desire to write to you and Indu is strong within me.

I was glad to learn from Indu's letter that you had sent a Chinese young woman to function as a governess for Tara and Rita.

Do not worry about me if you do not hear from me frequently. You ought to know by this time that I can look after myself anywhere and I flourish like the proverbial green bay tree even in restricted surroundings. Prison always serves as a tonic to me, a change from the horrible dullness of normal life. Anyway there is one consolation. Life is not likely to be dull for a long, long time anywhere.

Send my love to Raja when you write to him. I hope he is keeping well. And to Harsha and Ajit and Pan and all our friends.

Keep fit and smiling. Do not worry. I am almost inclined to quote a verse from Ghalib for your especial benefit but I shall refrain lest this prove too much for the very bright and efficient people who deal with our letters. I am having a dip into Urdu poetry with the Maulana's help.

All my love.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

P.S.

Bets,

Your letter of the 12th Sept., had just been handed over to me. For a wonder it had only taken six days.

I am horrified to learn that Raja is growing a beard. This is wholly inexcusable and you must tell him so.

Love,

Jawahar

Sept. 24th Thursday

Books—books from Taraporevala through Govt. Only a quarter of those ordered by me; still a goodly number. Maulana has received a large assortment, chiefly dealing with 19th cent. India.

In the evening a letter from Betty dated 20th. She had of course not received then my letter of the 18th. An interesting sentence informing me that she, and others, knew well where we were, though she could not send letters direct.

Sept. 25th

Sent an order for Bachhraj (through Govt. of course) to pay to the Secretary of the Govt. of Bombay, Home Dept. (Political) Rs. 137-4-0 for cost of books supplied. This includes Mahmud's bill for Rs. 31/7/-.

Oct. 3, 1942

On the 30th Sept. I had a letter from Betty, or rather a joint one from her & Psyche. On Oct. 1st a bundle containing books from them and some winter clothes—though winter seems very far off and it grows warmer daily. It is much warmer now than it was a month ago or when we came.

Also received Rs. 50/- from Betty. Previously I had cashed a cheque for Rs. 100/- through the Supt. Out of this 150/- I spent Rs. 79-9-6 to the end of September leaving a balance of Rs. 70-6-6. Apart from this I spent about Rs. 15/- in tips to prisoners being discharged. This out of some cash with me.

x

x

x

x

Wrote to Betty today.

x

x

x

x

Yesterday was Bapu's birthday. There was some vague talk of our observing it in some particular way but nothing came of it as we could not think of anything special. Profulla Babu has been spinning more and spinning very well indeed. Some others also spin. But I do not & have not even got my charkha.

Mahmud's ill-health worsens. He has insisted on fasting during the *Ramazan*—it is the 21st or 22nd day today. All his previous gain has gone. He grows so helpless.

Darling Betty,

Please thank Psyche for the books which I appreciate greatly. Tell her, when you see her, that she need not send me Bradley's *Shakespeare's Tragedies*.⁴⁷ I am not in a particular mood for Shakespearean tragedy when there is tragedy enough in the present. Besides, modern developments in science are attracting me more at present. You must remember that I am the President-elect of the Indian Science Congress which is due to meet in Lucknow early in January!

But Euripides' plays (Gilbert Murray's⁴⁸ translation) I would appreciate some time or other if and when Psyche can find them in her books. There is no particular need for them and certainly no hurry.

The four issues of *Life* which you sent me were welcome, though they were fairly ancient. I think you asked me in one of your letters about foreign magazines. If you can occasionally send me *Life* or *Time* or the *New Statesman* or the *American Nation* they will be welcome, though I do not know what will get through. Do not put yourself out for them. They need only be sent if they are handy and easily available.

Mahmud, in spite of his ill health, has persisted in fasting through the month of *Ramazan*. It has done him no good physically, whatever spiritual benefit he might derive from it. Fortunately the month, like everything else, is going to end soon. He sends you his love.

This letter has almost the appearance of a business letter. The adventures of innocence, *on dit*, are not frightfully interesting, nor are those of the innocents who are in prison or detention. We live a strictly

47. A.C. Bradley: *Shakespearean Tragedy* (1904).

48. (1866–1957); British classical scholar best known for his verse translations of the Greek dramatists, especially Euripides.

regular life and follow the clock round. Maulana is so frightfully punctual about his habits that we are all of us kept on the alert lest there might be a few seconds delay. It is odd and interesting and sometimes a little irritating for a group of persons, of entirely different habits and tastes, to be herded together. Perhaps nowhere else has one such an opportunity of finding each other out as in the close companionship of prison. Often we appreciate others the more, in spite of the obvious differences, for each tries to fit in with the others.

And so, *au revoir*—and love—

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

From the Unmentionable Place!

October 15, 1942

Darling Indu,

It is nearly a month now since I heard from you or wrote to you. During this month I have had no news of you or *Puphi* or Chand. I did not write to you again as I was waiting for your answer. I was not quite sure about my letter reaching you—there were so many high walls to be crossed, so many hurdles to be overcome, so many pigeon-holes which might engulf it. So I waited. Normally, I have learnt from the past nine weeks' experience, it takes about ten days for a letter to get through, and that is long enough in all conscience. I do not worry about you for I know you will look after yourself and keep cheerful and well. But there is occasionally a feeling of emptiness and some news, some lines written in your handwriting, fills this and I feel better.

So I am not waiting any longer and am writing to you today for the act of writing itself gives a little satisfaction. If you can write from time to time, I shall be happy. Perhaps, through you, I might have some news of Feroze also.

Round about Allahabad it must be cool now and the nights must be very pleasant. Here it is still warm, though there has been a slight change for the better during the last two days. After the rains stopped it became very hot—September and early October were hotter than August. Perhaps by the end of the month it will be pleasant and cool. But I must say we have little to complain of the climate. It is dry and healthy.

What do you do. How do you occupy yourself? There is nothing like taking to gardening. Even apart from the beauty that flowers give to

our surroundings, the joy of tending them and seeing them grow and bloom from day to day is a fascinating business. I love to play about with the soft warm earth. I think there is a certain psychic satisfaction about the earth, and we, who have cut ourselves away from it, miss this very essential thing; if I read or write all day, there is something that I lack, and this contact with the earth goes some way to supply it—not wholly of course for the human personality requires many things.

So I hope you will take to gardening. It does not matter much whether you do it well or badly, whether you arrange the flowers in the right order or not. It is the act of doing it that matters and one learns more from this than from books. I suppose you can easily get flower seeds. Even Anand Bhawan could provide you with some. But it is better to get good ones if these are available. Sweet peas are, I think, the most suitable flowers for one in jail. They appeal equally to the sight and the sense of smell. But there is no reason to confine oneself to a few varieties. Get good tools. It is pleasant to use a clean good tool. You should not dig. But there are many other operations that you could do.

For the last month or more we have been thinking of growing flowers here. The soil is none too good, being stony, but that can be remedied with labour. We have been trying to get seeds—so far without success. But we live in hopes. Meanwhile, I have been doing a fair amount of digging and that is good in itself. I feel pleasantly weary afterwards and a sense of well-being fills me. I was a little afraid that I might not be able to dig as my right arm has grown strangely weak during the past year and even a hard game of badminton was a painful affair. I discovered this in Dehra Dun and I think I told you about it then.

But, strange to say, digging, though a much heavier task, did not affect the forearm that way. It was the turning and twisting of badminton that gave twinges of pain. So I have dug regularly for many days and played about with the earth. In addition, I have been carrying on with some other moderate exercises, the *shirshasana* etc and of course breathing. Quite a good deal of time is taken up by these various activities, but then one has time here.

I played a little badminton here. I did not take to it much partly because of my forearm and partly because, to begin with, I was too good for the others. I have now practically given it up.

As for books, I waded through them. I had tried to get a large assortment of them but relatively few came. Perhaps more may follow. I have enough for some time and then others here have their own lots. So it does not really matter. A large number of books round about one

gives one a homely feeling and it is pleasant to choose from them and dip into odd books. With a limited number one is bound down and sometimes one has to read books which normally one would not go near.

I have just finished reading Hogben's *Science for the Citizen*—a huge tome of nearly 1100 pages, with Horrabin's illustrations. It is an amazing performance, this book, and though sometimes it is heavy reading and the mathematical formulae are none too easy, on the whole it is an astonishingly good book. I am surprised that I should have kept away from it for these five years or so since it has been out. Though perhaps I would not have had the time to read it outside, I am anxious now to read Hogben's other book—*Mathematics for the Million*—but I cannot get it.

I suppose you know both these books though you may not have read them. Try to get them if you can and read them at leisure, skipping over the technical and more difficult parts. Chand might try reading them also.

Another fat tome that I am reading now, but a very different one, is an ancient Chinese novel,⁴⁹ written at various times several centuries ago. I have Pearl Buck's translation and it runs to 1279 pages! It is interesting as giving a picture of Chinese life and custom and as a tale it is seldom dull.

I am trying to get some more books on science in order to qualify myself to some extent at least for the presidentship of the All India Science Congress which holds its next session at Lucknow next January! Not that there is the slightest chance of my presiding over it.

This was an ideal opportunity for me to improve my Urdu. I have been trying hard to get some Urdu books from Bombay—so far without success. Meanwhile, Maulana writes down for me an Urdu couplet or two every other day out of the vast stores accumulated in his mind. Thus I am getting an insight into Urdu poetry. He has an astonishing memory and his information on a variety of subjects is encyclopaedic. He is conversant enough with many trends of modern thought, reads masses of books, and yet he is essentially the 18th century rationalist—the type that especially flourished in France just before the revolution there, like Diderot etc who were called the Encyclopaedists. He is soaked in the lore of the Middle Ages and especially of the Arab world and Western Asia and India during Muslim times. He has Plato and

49. *All Men Are Brothers*, translation of the Chinese classic *Shui hu Chuan* by Shih Nai-an in which historical and legendary romances, that lived in oral tradition, have been set down.

Aristotle at his finger tips and is perfectly at home at Cordoba⁵⁰ of Arab Spain. He is full of intimate anecdotes of kings and scholars of the past. It seems such a pity that with such vast learning and a very unusually keen mind and a powerful style, he should have written so little, when third-rate people are continually producing tenth-rate books. Do you know that when he was barely fifteen he was delivering lectures in logic and philosophy to learned audiences!

I write on—but I must take pity on the various bright persons who will have to read through all this—all the Sherlock Holmes and the Watsons, chiefly the latter—and whose eagle eyes are ever in search of *lese majeste*⁵¹ against the British imperial fabric. Poor eyes—how dull they must grow at this unattractive work. But if I write too much, they might roll themselves in wrath and wreak vengeance on this letter, consigning it to some dusty pigeonhole. So I must restrain myself for otherwise I would write on and on to you and thus carry myself in fancy to some other place where you are near me and I can turn to you and see you and touch you and talk to you.

Keep well and cheerful, my dear, and make the best of this period. It does us all good if we only know how to pick out that good.

My love to you—

Your loving
Papu

Oct. 16. Friday

I grow lazy at least so far as the writing of this journal is concerned. There are many little happenings I could write about—incidents which enliven us or depress us or at any rate break the monotony of our dull routine lives. But then the feeling overwhelms me—what is the good of recording these petty incidents? Perhaps I could put on record my changing moods or my reflections on my companions here. But even that did not seem worthwhile. Is all this so important & after all, to me or to anyone else?

Moods change—there is a flash of temper at some news in the paper or the darkness of depression. Inevitably also we rub each other up

50. During the Omayyad period (756-1031), Cordoba was a centre of Muslim and Jewish cultures and a seat of learning.

51. Treason.

wrongly sometimes, though on the whole we carry on fairly well and pay due regard to our companions. Probably I am more guilty than anyone else—yet I must say I have behaved tolerably well considering my past record!

Mahmud irritates me, probably because I like him and want him to pull himself up. I want to help him in this and feel I can do it. But he insists on the wrong things and seems to be growing feebler and older and heavier in mind from day to day. This affects me in two ways. Directly, because I dislike his going to pieces. Indirectly because I am continually reminded that he and I are of the same age and the sight of him makes me feel older.

He did well during the first month. Marked improvement. Was livelier. Then with the coming of *Ramazan* and fasting, slow deterioration started. Physically he grew weaker and he spent most of his time in prayers and recitations—which irritated me. On the 25th or 26th day of the fast he grew worse and had to give it up. He was taken out, secretly and carefully guarded, to the D.M.'s bungalow for medical examination. He had high fever later and was in bed for three days. Since then he has been improving slowly but he looks broken up, and moves as if he was seventy or more. Looks melancholy and sad.

x x x x

Id came and we distributed some sweet vermicelli among the convicts & warders. This not without some argument.

x x x x

I have been digging morning & evening, preparing flower beds but no seeds have so far come, although ordered two or three weeks ago. I like this digging business and playing about with the soft earth.

x x x x

Nearly a month ago I wrote to Indu and I looked forward to her reply. I gave her two weeks or at most three and decided not to write again till I heard from her. An item of news in the papers informed me that my letter to her had reached Anand Bhawan. I took it for granted that it would find her in prison—in Naini or wherever she might be. So I waited for her answer.

After the three weeks were over and her letter had not come, I grew a little worried. Three days ago I had a letter from Tara. Suddenly I felt I must write to Indu. Perhaps another letter from me would cheer her up. Letters are very welcome in jail.

So yesterday I wrote a long letter to her and another⁵² to Tara. In the afternoon I sent them to the Superintendent. In the evening I was given a letter from Betty. Curious how letters come for me just when I have myself written. This happened on the last occasion also.

Betty wrote that Upadhyaya had come to Bombay from Allahabad with some books &c. He told her that my last letter to Indu did not reach her. It was sent by Tara to the District Magistrate who returned it, saying that it could not be delivered as prisoners were neither allowed to write nor receive letters! So Nan, Indu and Chand have not written at all or received letters since they were sent to prison. And of course no interviews. This apparently a special rule in the U.P.

Cheerful! I felt angry and out of sorts for the whole evening and I have not quite recovered yet. If I cannot write to Indu then there is no point in my writing to anyone else. So no letters in future, unless the unforeseen occurs.

Everything—events in India and official speeches & statements in England—make me angrier and angrier.⁵³ I am rapidly losing all the political serenity I possessed. If that is so with me, what of the others?

26.10.42

Darling Betty,

Your letter of the 17th reached me three days ago. Your previous letter of the 8th October reached me on the 15th. On that very day, the 15th, I had written to Indu my second letter to her since my arrest. For nearly a month I waited for an answer from her to my first letter. Finally I decided to write again. Hardly had I done so when I learnt from your letters that Indu was not allowed to receive any communications or to write letters. We have been told that we may only write to certain near relatives—father, mother, brothers, sisters, wife, sons, daughters and

⁵² Jawaharlal wrote 14 letters (some jointly addressed) to Nayantara Pandit and Chandralekha Pandit during this term of imprisonment. Two letters addressed to Nayantara Pandit have been printed in this volume. Copies of other letters are not available in the J.N. Papers in N.M.M.L.

⁵³ During September and October 1942, the Governments in London and Delhi held that the Congress aim was to cripple India's war effort, that any withdrawal of British power would mean civil war and an invitation to Japan, that the majority of Indians were opposed to the Congress and that India already had a representative government in the form of the Viceroy's Executive Council which had on its own decided to suppress the August movement.

a few others. Having no father or mother or brothers or wife or son, the burden of writing is therefore lessened for me. It appears to be limited to my daughter and two sisters. As the daughter and one of the sisters are in a prison in the U.P. where they may not get letters the list is further reduced and only you ultimately find a place in it. So, as far as I can see, you are the only person in the wide world to whom I am permitted and supposed to write. Of course, you are a host by yourself and it is very delightful to hear from you and to write to you. But, being so made, I do not take easily to writing under these conditions.

We read of Suhrid's death⁵⁴ in the papers and were deeply grieved. To his family the shock of Suhrid's death must have been a terrible one. How fortunate they have been thus far, and how distant from sorrow and misfortune. Yet none may avoid these times and perhaps without them we are incomplete. In this world of strife and utmost misery we have to become tough.

Nothing is so bad as to remain for ever in the ruts of life and that is especially so in these days of storm and change all over the world. There is so much sorrow and frustration everywhere that we cannot really understand it emotionally unless in a sense we become part of it. So out of sorrow itself comes a new understanding and new strength.

You will probably get this letter round about your birthday. All good wishes to you, my dear, and many happy and happier returns.

When you write to me if you have news of Nan, Indu, Chand, Ranjit, Feroze and others send it on.

Love,

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

10.11.42

Darling Betty,

Your letter of the 31st October reached me six days ago. I wanted to write to you in reply immediately but for some odd reason, or rather impulse, I decided not to write till after my birthday. I wanted to have the sensation of being 53 and then writing from that noble, though distressing, height. But suddenly I felt the absurdity of all this, as I lay

54. Suhrid Sarabhai, the eldest son of Ambalal Sarabhai, died after a long illness.

in bed last night, and changed my mind. So today on *Bhaiya Dooj* I am taking to my pen again.

It is three months and a day since we came here. Time creeps on inexorably, as it does, regardless of our wishes and desires, and we adapt ourselves, as best we may, to its blind cause. We have adapted ourselves to it here and the days go by without incident. Petty happenings disturb us sometimes or some piece of news agitates the mind. But, on the whole, there is a certain calm on the surface of the waters of the mind. Wavelets pass over time. Underneath there is more often a turmoil, a thinking furiously of the witches' cauldron that is the world today, and our attempt to pierce this veil of the future. In prison, the present almost ceases to be, for active sensations and emotions in regard to it are usually absent. Only the past and the future count, and some lose themselves in the past and some face the trackless future. To some extent all indulge in retrospection of the past for that appears to be the only thing that can be visualized without much difficulty, and anyway it is easier to allow the mind to wander rather aimlessly in known grooves. For my part I am almost always more concerned with the future. It is a far more exciting quest and the unknown has a fatal fascination. Also it satisfies one's conceit to imagine that one might be able to mould this as it emerges from the slime and mud of the present, as a potter with his clay. An empty conceit probably, but nevertheless good for the soul.

I am glad you met Dr. Wen.⁵⁵ Your account of him was very interesting. During this year that is passing one thing has pleased me—the greater contacts between the people of India and the people of China. The contacts are not always as they should be, but even so, they are all to the good. The future of which I dream is inextricably interwoven with close friendship and something almost approaching union with China.

And so—*au revoir*—may the pleasant sun of winter warm you and the cool breezes refresh you and fill you with new energy.

Love,

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

55. Wen Yuan-ning; then Special Representative of the Chinese Ministry of Information in India.

Nov. 13, Friday.

It is nearly a month since I wrote in this journal and three months and four days have passed by since we came to Ahmadnagar Fort. Tomorrow is my birthday and I feel a little overwhelmed and somewhat resentful of the fact that I have completed 53 years. Time sweeps on and the energy & vitality of youth slowly ebb away. Not that I feel less vital or ineffective. I have no such feeling but the thought of ever increasing age is a depressing one. What of the big things and brave ventures which have filled my mind these many years? Shall I be capable of them when the time comes? Or will the time itself come for me to play an effective part in moulding events? To some extent, I suppose, I have made a difference to events in India in the past. But I hunger for constructive work on a vast scale. The time for that will surely come to India—but to me?

x

x

x

x

I have had two letters from Betty. I have sent her a reply. I was distressed to learn from her that Ranjit had asked her not to go to Allahabad. An extraordinary thing to say to anyone, especially to her. I have suggested to her to go to Anand Bhawan.

x

x

x

x

We celebrated *Diwali* here—Illuminations & decorations and a feed for all the convicts here with us. The decorations were quite successful chiefly because of Shankar, one of the convicts, who is remarkably clever. He is a barber by profession, and a good barber too, and is a useful handy man for anything. He has been repeatedly to prison for petty thefts—eight or nine times. Money can hardly be the motive as he earns a fair amount in a barber's saloon he owns in Poona & is capable of earning in other ways. And then his thefts have been small ones. He is decent, intelligent & well-behaved. Almost, one would think, that he was a victim of kleptomania.

Shankar made a number of pretty Chinese lanterns from some coloured paper we gave him.

x

x

x

x

Yesterday we read Winston Churchill's speech⁵⁶ about the British Empire. He was going to hold on to it. Also the French Empire was to continue, presumably under the patronage of the British.⁵⁷ I felt pleased at this straight speaking. The issue should be clear and indeed is clear. How can any decent Indian submit to this or agree to co-operate with Churchill and his underlings passes my comprehension. How can even Stafford Cripps bow down to this?

But my contempt for the Indian members of the Viceroy's Council, more especially for Aney,⁵⁸ has reached highwater mark.

Nov. 16, Sunday

So I am fiftythree! Last year I spent my birthday in Dehra Dun Jail and Indu and Psyche came to visit me and brought masses of flowers and some gifts. We had a feast. Ranjit was there of course.

How many birthdays I have spent in jail! I have lost count. Eight I think. How many more?

Mahmud presented me yesterday with a long letter, not to mention a bouquet of flowers and bagful of dried fruit. The letter was full of affection, rather pathetic and sentimental. He gave a record of our long friendship from the time in 1909 when he first met me in London. Asaf Ali gave me a cigarette holder which he managed to get from the local bazaar through the jailer. Not easy to raise presents in prison.

Pantji however took the lead in arranging some kind of a formal presentation. He managed a huge garland and eleven bouquets of flowers, so that each one of this party might give me something. The Maulana garlanded me. Mahtab produced an Oriya poem in my honour.

⁵⁶ In his address at the Lord Mayor's annual banquet on 10 November 1942, Churchill declared: "Let me, however, make this clear—let there be no mistake about it in any quarter. We mean to hold our own. I have not become the King's First Minister in order to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire. For that task, if ever it was prescribed, someone else would have to be born, and under democracy, I suppose, the nation would have to be consulted."

⁵⁷ In the same speech of 10 November 1942, Churchill hoped that France would rise again and wished her "free and strong, with her empire gathered around her and with Alsace-Lorraine restored."

⁵⁸ In October 1942, Aney said in the Central Assembly that the arrest of Congress leaders was justified by the subsequent sabotaging activities.

The flowers were used later to decorate our dining table. It was rather effective. There was a large bowl of roses and the National Flag (in paper) stood up proudly in the midst of a mass of flowers and leaves. There was a special feed also.

Nov. 24th Tuesday

During the last week I have had two letters—one from Tara & the other from Betty. Also a note from Bachhraj informing me that they have made various payments to the Govt. of Bombay according to my directions—this for books &c. This note contained the pleasing information that about \$ 2000 (or over 6000 rupees) had been received from John Day on account of my royalties.

A parcel of books, cigarettes, honey and the fancy handkerchiefs, which Bul always sends on my birthday, has also come.

x x x x

I wrote today to Betty and Tara. So I have two correspondents.

x x x x

I have been feeling slightly depressed lately, especially yesterday. I suppose the normal ups & downs of jail.

24.11.42.

Darling Betty,

Two of your letters have reached me since I wrote to you last—one dated Nov. 6th and the other Nov. 16th. Also the books, handkerchiefs, cigarettes and honey. These welcome gifts reached me four days ago. The handkerchiefs are lovely as usual. Will you thank Bul for them and give her my love?

The complete collection of Greek plays which Psyche has sent is a grand affair and I was delighted with it. Few other books could be more welcome in jail. Tell her that I shall return to her or endeavour

to do so Gilbert Murray's translation of *Alcestis*.⁵⁹ Tell her also that she might as well take my remaining yarn which is lying in Anand Bhawan. I realize that it is not easy to get it woven now, but that does not matter. Anyway it is better for her to keep this yarn with the rest. When you go back to Anand Bhawan—and I hope you will go soon—you will probably find it in one of my dressing table drawers. You can take it out and bring it with you to Bombay and there will be probably a bundle of some loose hanks.

From Allahabad,⁶⁰ you might also bring my spinning wheel, the box charkha. Keep it with you till I require it and send for it. I have done no spinning here since I came chiefly because I have given a great deal of time to gardening. I want some occupation for my hands. I think it is essential especially in jail. Gardening has been a great comfort to me and gives me a certain psychological satisfaction which I might otherwise lack. Later, if and when I regain [*sic*] my charkha I shall let you know.

I liked Lin Yutang's new book, though I preferred his former novel *Moment in Peking*.⁶¹ This latter was really a magnificent book. Some people did not like it.

Your account of General Yu⁶² was very interesting.

Love,

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

59. A play by Euripides; in Greek mythology, Alcestis was the daughter of Pelies. She married Admetus, who met her father's demand that the suitor come for her in a chariot drawn by wild animals. Her wifely devotion led her to sacrifice herself to save her husband's life.

60. The source has "Ahmedabad".

61. In this novel, Lin Yutang deals with the political and social effects of the Japanese invasion upon a small group of wealthy Chinese families and finds a new outlook in their personal relationships.

62. General Yu Ch'i-shih (b. 1904); Chief of Staff to Chiang Kai-shek, 1942-45; Director, Military Affairs Bureau, National Government, 1946-48.

Nov. 24, 1942

TO NAYANTARA PANDIT⁶³

Darling Tara,

I was happy to receive your letter of the 10th November and to have news of you and Rita as well as of Anand Bhawan.

I am glad all of you keep cheerful and happy and it is right that you are proud to be living in such stirring times. Merely to exist and carry on is of course not good enough; anybody can do that. We have to be thoroughly alive and vital, awake in mind and body, and eager to play our part worthily in the great drama that surrounds us. Those who are very young, like you and Rita, have to prepare yourselves in every way to play that part in the future, with a body that is fit and strong and a mind that is sensitive and keen as the edge of a sword and a character that is firm and steadfast and wedded to high ideals. All of us whoever we may be and wherever we may be have to play our parts, now or later, and it is up to us to play them well and train ourselves for the purpose.

As you grow up you will learn more and more of our national tradition and this will strengthen and inspire you for there is something very wonderful about the long perspective of India's history through six thousand years and more. But we must learn from other countries also—from China with her equally ancient and splendid culture and history, from Europe, from America. In our smaller circle we have a family tradition of which we may well be proud. But all this brings responsibilities and we have to live up to them.

You ask me whether I believe in God? Now that is a difficult question to answer in a letter. I would have to write a long essay, almost a book, in order to give some kind of an intelligible answer. But before trying to give an answer, I would ask what is meant by the word 'God'? Words are tricky things and people use them in different senses and then they argue and get hot and bothered. So 'God' is used by people in hundreds of different ways and meanings. In my *Glimpses of World History* there is a chapter on religion in the early part of the book. It does not say much but you might read it.

It is important to know, if it is possible, what to believe and what not to believe. But it is always better to think out things for oneself and arrive at one's own conclusions than to keep a closed mind and accept

63. Nayantara Sahgal Papers in the owner's possession.

blindly what others say. Others can and should help of course, but unless we find our own way we cannot go far. The main thing is to keep all the windows of our mind open and not to become bigoted and closed to reason. For mind is the greatest thing man has and reason is its method of working. People who do not use their minds hardly deserve the name of human beings. It is true that the mind does not always solve our problems. Still there is no other way and perhaps the problems will solve themselves.

To know what to believe and what not to believe is not an easy matter. It is more important, however, to know what to do. If we have worthy ideals and try to live up to them we shall not go far wrong, whatever our other beliefs might be. Those other beliefs do not matter so much after all. Why should we therefore lose ourselves in useless speculations? We have a big enough job in this world, to understand it and our fellow-creatures, and to work for its betterment.

You write that you are reading some parts of *Glimpses*. The book is too big and, I am afraid, parts are dull. You have chosen the duller parts! The earlier part is probably more interesting. Anyway I suggest that you read *The Last Letter*⁶⁴ which is given just before the *Postscript and Five Years Later*.⁶⁵ This 'Last Letter' is a kind of introduction and apology.

You cannot miss Meredith in the library. It is over twenty volumes, all alike, light green binding. You can thus spot it from a distance.

You ask me about a film—what a strange question this sounds here. No I have not seen the particular film you mention.

Masi and Harsha and Ajit will probably go to Anand Bhawan about Christmas time for some weeks. I have especially asked her to go there for every member of the family should go to Anand Bhawan from time to time, unless of course prison walls come in the way. Anand Bhawan is something more than a mere house. It is full of memories for all of us and is indeed part of our family—a very solid part. I am sure you and Rita will enjoy Masi's visit.

I suppose the flowers are coming out now in the garden and soon the place will be gay with colours. We are also trying to produce a bit of a garden here, a small affair, but one that demands incessant attention and labour. Having no *malis* we have to do the digging etc., ourselves.

My love to you and Rita.

Your loving
Mamu

64. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 5, pp. 493-499.

65. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 11, pp. 162-181.

Nov. 26. Thursday

Today the Superintendent conveyed a message to me from the U.P. Govt. via the Bombay Govt. It was about Indu's health. I was informed that she had been examined by the Civil Surgeon and he had found no active traces of the disease. Her health was indifferent on the whole but there had been no marked deterioration since her arrest and detention. This message was apparently sent at Indu's suggestion as there was no other means for her to communicate with me or indeed with anybody.

Possibly the message was meant to cheer me or at least to free me from anxiety. It had the opposite effect and I have felt very low since I received it. I had no idea that she was unwell in prison and now it appears that she has not kept well. I am worried and feel rather empty. Poor little girl, how lonely she must be in those dreary surroundings of Naini Prison known as the female jail! No interviews, no letters.

10.12.42

Darling Betty,

Your letter of the 6th reached me yesterday. I am glad you are thinking of going to Allahabad. I am sure that is the right and proper thing to do from every point of view. Abnormal happenings are apt to upset the nerves of all of us and for a moment we lose the proper perspective on life. We have had and are having an abundance of abnormality everywhere and it is not surprising that this affects each one of us in various ways. Yet we cannot afford to have our eyes bloodshot even though that might be the temporary condition of other people's eyes. We must look straight and act straight and if we do so, our nerves behave themselves. I think, on the whole, I succeed in this endeavour. You need not worry about my not being settled down here. I can easily adapt myself to new surroundings and I have done so here and lead an ordered life keeping my mind and body as fit as possible. The body reacts on the mind so much and vice versa of course, and I try to keep some kind of an equilibrium between them. Being active by nature, I seek some kind of activity of the body where my mind has of necessity to lie fallow. Hence my enthusiasm for gardening, especially the physical aspect of it. Latterly, since it has been a little colder I take a sunbath in the early morning before the sun gets too hot. That

gives me a feeling of health and vitality. And I read of course, rather leisurely and not too much of it just at present.

I do not know whether it is possible for you to send your manuscript to me. Perhaps it is best to wait till your book⁶⁶ comes out.

We get some newspapers and so, to that extent, can keep in touch with the news. Newspapers in prison give a curiously distant view of the world. There is something unreal about it, something impersonal, though not always so.

I was very sorry to learn about Asta.⁶⁷ We become so attached to these domestic pets and their lives are so brief. Many years ago I decided not to keep them, for their death upset my composure.

The old year is passing and soon the New Year will be upon us. All my good wishes to you for this year that is coming and all the others that will follow it. Happiness is after all a state of the mind and should not be affected too much by extreme occurrences. So why should we not rise above circumstances and cultivate that state of mind? But even more worthwhile than just happiness is a tranquillity of mind and firmness of purpose. May all these be yours!

My love to Raja, the children, Psyche, Pan and Chinni—and to you lots of it, of course.

Love,

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

17.12.42

Darling Betty,

I wrote to you just a week ago and normally I would have written again after hearing from you. I am writing, however, earlier than usual as an idea has just struck me and I propose to give you some trouble.

The problem of shaving daily is no longer as simple as it used to be. Safety razor blades are more difficult to obtain and are very expensive. They are seldom good. I have just thought of the electric razor. I have only seen advertisements of this and have no personal experience

66. *With No Regrets* (Oxford University Press, London, 1944); it narrates the history of the Nehru family and the popular legends that have grown around Anand Bhawan with the author's personal reminiscences.

67. Krishna Hutheesing's terrier, which had died.

of it. But was once told that it was more or less satisfactory. It used to cost about Rs. 70/-.

If this is available and its price has not gone up too much, I should like to have it. Could you please find out and get one for me?

Love,

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

December 20th

Took my physical measurements today.

Chest	36 in (normal)	38 expanded (33½—36½—38)
Waist	29½—33½	(29½—31—34½)
Hips	36	
Thigh	21 at mark 18½	
Calf	12½	
Upper arm	12½	
biceps &c		
Weight	139 pounds	

My weight when I came here was 143— It came down to 140 rapidly & then remained steady. Went down slowly to 137.

TO MADAME CHIANG KAI-SHEK⁶⁸

Somewhere in India
December 21, 1942

My dear Madame Chiang,

I am presuming to write these few lines to you not knowing whether they will reach you. Indeed the presumption is that they will not, for the rules that are supposed to govern us in our present condition expressly prohibit all communications except to certain near relatives and then only on domestic matters. Our prohibitions circumscribe and limit even these rules. In spite of this unfavourable outlook, the urge to write to you is so strong that I cannot resist it, and I am sending this paper bark on the stormy seas that surround us. Perhaps, who

68. J.N. Correspondence. N.M.M.L.

knows?, it might survive the perils and dangers and reach you somewhere, some time or other. Even if it fails to do so, the mere act of writing to you brings some comfort and satisfaction.

The immediate cause of my writing to you is the news that has reached us that you are under treatment in hospital.⁶⁹ I am anxious about your health. I hope you have prospered under this treatment and have got rid of all the after effects of that injury which you neglected for so long. I wish I could have news of you and the assurance that you are well.

Christmas approaches and the New Year, with all its hopes and desires, is almost upon us. To you and the Generalissimo I send all my good wishes and friendly greetings on the eve of this pregnant year. May it be well with you both, and with China, now and always, and may your light of faith and determination and unswerving courage pierce ever more the encircling gloom, till it spreads out over us all, and darkness is no more.

Need I say that during these long and dreary months, my thoughts have been constantly with you and the Generalissimo and with China, whose flaming and life-giving symbols both of you are? In my quiet and seclusion, I have thought of and earnestly hoped for the crowning success of your great cause, with which, in my own mind, our own cause is inextricably intertwined. I cannot separate them, for they are one. My great regret is that circumstances should have so conspired that my colleagues and countrymen and I cannot play a more vital and active part in furtherance of this great cause.

On August 8th I gave a message to a Chinese journalist in Bombay.⁷⁰ I did not know then that within a few hours I would be arrested and that this would be my last message before I had to retire to seclusion. But I was glad of it later that my last words were addressed to the people of China, and more especially to the Generalissimo and you. In this message I repeated that we shall keep faith with China whatever happened. By that pledge we shall remain, and I trust that the opportunity will be given to us to redeem it in full measure.

I hope you are well and keep in good cheer. I may not mention the place where I am kept except to say that I am somewhere in India. But it is a small matter where I am for my mind is untamed and unbound, and it wanders where it will, crossing seas and mountains and

69. In early December 1942, it was announced that Madame Chiang had arrived in the U.S. and that she had entered a hospital for treatment for the after-effects of an accident she had met with five years ago.

70. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 12, p. 482.

visiting far-away countries. And this mind carries always with it the precious treasure of my friendship with you and the Generalissimo.

With my homage,

Sincerely yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Christmas Day—1942

I neglect this diary and seldom write in it, which means that my mind is occupied with other things and that I am becoming a slave to the routine of jail. It is futile to write of trivial happenings and difficult to write of the thoughts that fill the mind or pass through after a brief stay leaving ripples behind.

I have lived alone in prison or with a few companions—also with a crowd, though that was long ago. The present experience is however a novel one. The type of companions is different. This has its obvious advantages, but also some disadvantages. One has to adapt oneself more to the others. It is interesting and pleasing to see how each one of us makes a deliberate effort to do so. We rub each other the wrong way occasionally but it is surprising how well, on the whole, we have got on during these past months. We have, almost unawares, got to know each other better and the non-political, non-public aspects of each one have come out. Sometimes this has been a little disappointing and disconcerting, and yet this has been rare. The general impression I think, certainly my own impression, has been one of increased respect for the good qualities and adaptability of others.

How different we are from each other—a varied assortment of Indian types! Maulana is in many ways an astonishing person. His fund of knowledge is truly vast. His mind is keen as a razor's edge and his commonsense strong. He and I are in some ways—in outlook, approach on life &c—as the poles apart. Yet I get on very well with him and there are very few persons whose opinion & advice on public or private matters I would value more. He is difficult to get into, and has a thick superficial covering which conceals the inner contents. Glimpses of the inner person surprise one continually. He is a curious combination of the old & the new. Perfectly familiar with the new world, in so far as one can be so through books, his background is still eighteenth century or thereabouts. He adapts that to modern conditions, and does so remarkably well, but that background remains. There

is something big in him—both as a scholar and man of action—Still there is something lacking which prevents him from bearing rich fruit as he should. Fine thinker and magnificent writer as he is, with vast stores of information at his disposal, he should have turned out a host of splendid books. Yet his record is a very limited one. As a man of action also his record would have been a far more dominating one but for that lack of something. Is he too philosophical or too cynical or too sensitive? He is all that and yet the lack is of something else. I do not quite know what.

Compared to him, how small most other prominent men look. Jinnah, who has made good in his own way, is just an uncultured, untaught politician, with a politician's flair and instinct, and nothing more.

Perhaps it is a certain vital energy, the force of life that must out, that Maulana lacks. Perhaps he grew up too soon and was much too precocious. He is not old now by any means and yet there has always been a ripe maturity about him and it is difficult to think of him as a wild and passionate youth. When he was fourteen he was considered an accomplished scholar and, I think, he delivered lectures on logic & philosophy at that age! His intellect grew at the expense of other aspects of his nature. Not that he is at all austere or stoically indifferent to the world's ways. He is human & full of humour.

It is passion that he lacks. He is too intellectual, too cultured, to be carried away. Life must become rather a tame affair without passion.

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A few days ago a rumour reached us, apparently without basis, that the Japanese had begun an invasion of India.⁷¹ This immediately started a train of thought. It was obvious that the average man in India is so full of bitterness against the British that he would welcome any attack on them. The last four & a half months have increased this bitterness tremendously. And yet even a passive attitude of welcome to invasion is disastrous. What are we to do about it, sitting here in Ahmadnagar Fort? Precious little anyway. What of Gandhiji? Would he make any move? Doubtful. The only move he or anyone else could take would be to write to the Viceroy. Such a letter would inevitably contain strong criticism of the Govt., re-affirmation of noncooperation with the present Govt., as well as opposition to any Japanese or other invasion. The Viceroy would probably sit on it.

71. On 22 December 1942, Calcutta was bombed for the first time and the raids were repeated on the following two nights.

Maulana thought on these lines and discussed the matter with me. We could do very little anyway but he felt that to remain completely passive and not do anything at all was definitely bad. I agreed with him. There our talk ended for the moment and we decided to wait for developments.

X

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This talk and all the various possibilities filled my mind. Suddenly on the 21st Dec. it struck me that I should write to Madame Chiang Kai-shek. The letter might not be sent on to her for it was clearly against the rules which permit only letters to near relatives. Yet there was a chance of its going through. In any case the fact of writing itself had some significance now and [for] the future.

So I drafted that letter and showed this draft to Maulana, Vallabh-bhai & Pant. They all approved of the idea and suggested various alterations which I made. On the 22nd morning I sent the letter to the Superintendent.

There was occasion for writing. Madame Chiang had gone to America and was under treatment in hospital there. Also Christmas & the New Year were approaching. In my letter I referred to my message to China given on August 8th, some hours before our arrest. This was my last message.

This letter to Madame Chiang produced in me a lively sense of satisfaction. It was a break in our usual monotonous life and the mind seemed to waken up. After all I had done something, instead of being just a passive agent of events.

I have thought often of May Ling & the Generalissimo & China here in prison. It is clear from the brief reports that reach us that they have tried hard to help our cause.⁷² They have kept faith. Often my mind went back to the conversations I had with them during their visit to India, especially in Calcutta & Santiniketan. I am glad she has gone to America. The burden of five years and a half of war in China had been terrific and a change will do her good. The Generalissimo must be feeling very lonely.

72. In February 1942, Chiang Kai-shek appealed to Britain to concede to India "real political power". In a message to the American President he said: "The Cripps Mission's failure has resulted in a deterioration of the position and increased Indian hostile feeling toward Britain. According to Nehru, no real shift in authority was offered and no possibility existed for the establishment of people's army for defence purpose. Therefore, there was no basis for a compromise."

Will she go to England? There is talk of it and of an invitation from the Govt. there. Probably she will and yet I am not so sure. I imagine the Indian problem is a bit of a hindrance. She is not going to remain quiet over it.

When and where will I meet her again?

x

x

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This morning the news of Darlan's⁷³ assassination made me think sorrowfully of France's fate. What misery and unhappiness, what degradation and despair have fallen on her people! I think especially of Louise and Jean Jacques and others there. What has happened to Nanu?

x

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Nearly a month ago I received, through the India Office &c., a small book⁷⁴ of poems from Edward Thompson. It was a gift for Christmas. This gift gladdened me and the sense of aloofness from England was lessened. How much we are governed by personal friendship in our reactions to nations and countries. Edward, sensitive person that he is, must suffer much for all that is happening. And what of his son at the front, and his other son?⁷⁵

x

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x

x

Our garden grows and blossoms. It takes up a lot of our time, and more of my time than that of others. Yet it has been very much worthwhile and has added not only colour but an abiding interest to our lives here. The Morning Glory creeper was the first to blossom out and it has been greatly appreciated. Over a hundred fresh flowers come out daily and some of these are amazingly lovely. Vallabhbbhai takes a great deal of interest in the garden and knows something about it. Pantji & Shanker Rao have also shown an increasing interest. Asaf Ali of course.

73. Jean Francois Darlan (1881-1942); commander of the French Navy under the Vichy Government, 1937-42; Marshal Petain's chosen successor; went over to the Allied cause at Algiers in November 1942; shot dead on 24 December 1942 by a French royalist.

74. *New Recessional and Other Poems*.

75. William Frank Thompson died in action in Bulgaria in 1944, and the younger son, then serving with an armoured regiment in Italy, is now the well-known historian, E.P. Thompson.

27.12.42

Darling Betty,

I received your letter of the 21st yesterday, together with the note of the 22nd. The diary for 1943 reached me soon after I wrote to you last.

About the electric razor there is no hurry. But I think it is certainly a desirable acquisition in these days especially. Send it to me when it is available.

Your letter made me rather sad. You seem to be far from cheerful and loneliness and various difficulties oppress you. It is easy to understand all this and it is natural. Still it is not worthwhile to allow inevitable happenings to affect one in this way. Life is an odd game at best and it grows odder. It serves little purpose to complain against its vagaries or to allow them to fill our minds. The only right way to treat it and its ways is with a certain friendly and yet superior contempt. We can never allow ourselves to become victims of its pranks. So I hope you will cheer up.

I do not know if fruit can be sent to Indu. If so I should like Ladli Bhai to arrange for a large basket of fresh fruit to be sent to her weekly at least. Also such things as jam, honey, marmalade, etc. Some money might be deposited in her jail account also.

Perhaps you might also send an occasional basket of fruit from Bombay to Indu, if this reaches her.

Love to you and Raja. I hope you are keeping well.

Jawahar

Dec. 27th

News of Sikhandar Hyat's sudden death through heart failure. Bit of a shock. I felt sad though I liked him little enough in his politics & public life. Death and sudden death, softens one. In spite of his failings he had the virtue of a certain decency and gentlemanliness and that goes a long way. I thought of Tahira, his daughter, who is to be married in a day or two. Bright and attractive girl, suppressed in many ways by her father and made unhappy.

Punjab politics will now probably get into a mess and the immediate future may be worse than the past.⁷⁶

9.1.43.

Darling Bets,

I was happy to receive your letter of the 31st December. It came two days ago, the first in the New Year.

I am glad Ladli Bhai's visit went off satisfactorily and everything in Anand Bhawan and in the hospital is fixed up properly. About the Bhishti's⁷⁷ pension, certainly it should be continued and given to the daughter-in-law. Also any other help that Ladli Bhai may consider necessary. In all such matters he can be as generous as he likes.

I am glad you write to Amma. Send her my love. I should like to have news occasionally about Kailas and Sheila. She will be able to give it.

I am enclosing a fairly long list⁷⁸ of books which I should like you to get and send through the usual channel. Probably many of these books are not available. If so you can order them and live in hope. A number of the books are in Everyman's Library. Of course, it does not matter if they are available in some other edition.

You will notice that I want two books in the original Sanskrit—Kalidasa's *Shakuntala* and Bana Bhatta's *Kadambari*.⁷⁹ Both these ought to be easily procurable in Bombay.

One book you are hardly likely to get. This is Sylvain Levi's *Le Theatre Indien*.⁸⁰ But it must be available at a library. If so please get it for me and I shall return it soon.

I should like you also to send books from time to time to Indu. You can make your own choice. It is difficult for me to suggest names as I do not know what are available.

76. Sikandar Hayat Khan had described "Pakistan" as a "counsel of despair", and always insisted that his policy of governing Punjab by a Unionist Ministry should be taken as a lesson by which the Muslims could cooperate with other elements to get rid of communalism. With his death, the situation changed, and Jinnah attempted to increase his influence over the Muslims in the Punjab.

77. *Bhishti*—one who carries water in a leather bag.

78. Not available in the source.

79. A prose novel by Banabhatta who lived in the court of Harsha.

80. *The Indian Theatre* published in 1890.—

One other thing: could you send me a good fruit-crusher—those simple machines to extract juice.

Could you write to the Manager, Jamia Millia, Delhi, (I do not remember the exact address but perhaps you can find it out from Brelvi or somebody) and ask him whether the second volume of the Urdu translation of my *Glimpses of World History* is out. If not, when is it due?

This has become a very bald and business-like letter. But it carries, as usual, all my love.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

January 15. Friday

The New Year has come and is well on its way. It is only after a fortnight that I summon up enough energy or the desire to write in this very occasional journal.

Yesterday I was given a message from Government about the letter I wrote to Madame Chiang on December 21. This message ran more or less as follows: "Please inform Pandit Nehru that they (the Govt.) are unable to make an exception to the rules and his letter is therefore withheld." A disappointment and yet almost expected. Anyway, I am glad I wrote.

x x x x

I have been keeping unwell. A cold, sore throat and a cough. Added to this has been a toothache. I am afraid I shall have to get rid of another tooth. For the moment this toothache is much better and I can eat normally. But the pain comes back every other day or so. The cold is better also, but the cough is, if anything, worse.

Perhaps it is due to this that I have felt low and depressed. I have lost 3 or 4 pounds in weight during the last ten days. One night was a particularly bad one and I had to have recourse to Genaspirin—a very unusual thing for me.

x x x x

Yesterday I had a letter from Betty. Odd hints in it. Ladli Bhai came to Bombay and made out that it was imperative that some rooms

in Anand Bhawan—my rooms, Indu's and the library—should be kept locked up. What the reasons were I do not know and Betty did not mention them except to say that they were urgent and imperative. Evidently she and Psyche & Pan were impressed and agreed with Ladli Bhai—All this is very mysterious and odd....

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Five months and a quarter since we came here. What is the net result in the way of reading, learning, study &c? Not very much, I fear. Latterly I have been giving a good deal of time to Urdu. Progress is slow and yet I suppose there is some progress somewhere. Perhaps, if I continue, after another six months I should be able to read and write with moderate facility.

My chief reading recently has been Greek tragedy.

17.1.43

Darling Betty,

You know how I love honey. Especially the clear and golden, limpid triple-strained honey that Psyche sends from the wilds of Mahableshwar. But yesterday I suddenly developed a strong dislike for it. As I opened the suitcase you had sent me, a ghastly sight confronted me. Everything was in disarray, arranged anyhow with no thought or order and with bits of glass everywhere. And, honey, honey all over the place, honey sticking to the books, to the cigarette boxes, to the foodstuffs, surrounding the charkha, invading the electric razor, trickling into the *punis*. One of the honey bottles, just shoved in anyhow at the top and forced into some kind of position by the pressure of the lid, had broken up and gone to pieces, spreading its contents generously into all the nooks and corners. I gazed awestruck at the mess just one bottle of honey could make when given the chance to do so. I looked tenderly at the books—fortunately there were only two—and wondered how it was possible to remove this all-pervasive stickiness from their covers and pages. There was Zimmern's book, but this Zimmern⁸¹ is and has been a somewhat sticky person. And Lewis Carroll? Was it a new adventure for Alice to float about in honey?

Dirt, they say, is matter in the wrong place. So honey, very much in the wrong place, descended from its pedestal and became just sticky

81. Sir Alfred Zimmern (1879-1957): an authority on international institutions.

dirt. It spread not only to my belongings but, oozing out of the suitcase, invaded some books of Kripalani also. It was just amazing how everything had been shoved into that box regardless of consequences. Only a lunatic, I thought, could have done so, but then I underrated the innate capacity of the Bombay Secretariat for doing the wrong thing.

It was obvious that the fault was not yours or Pan's. The various articles had been taken out for examination at the Secretariat and then pushed back.

However, I soon recovered from the initial surprise and set about the work of salvage. In my enthusiasm for this I dipped a cigarette box (with cardboard covers) into a pailful of water. Gradually order emerged out of chaos and I found that the damage was not so great after all. The watch survived, so also the electric razor. The books did not suffer as much as I had expected. One bottle of honey was gone of course, leaving its mark in many places. Otherwise all was well or nearly well; a new excitement had been added for a while to the dull routine of existence. So do not worry.

I have received your letter of the 8th January. Naturally my room and Indu's in Anand Bhawan should be kept closed when both of us are away. That has been the practice and they have been opened only for an occasional cleaning. The library also is usually kept closed to protect the books. Whatever additional reasons there might be, it is for people outside to decide. So you had better act as all of you think fit in the matter. In any event a periodic cleaning and dusting of books is essential.

Apart from the other things you have sent, I have also received the sun-hat. Some time back I asked you to get for me a piece of khaki khadi for shorts and shirts. Perhaps it is not easy to get it in these days of cloth shortage. You might write to Hari to send me my old khaki shorts and shirts, if he can find them. He sent me some before but I should like to have more. Even one additional pair would be welcome. Also ask him to send me two bedsheets, a large bath towel and a coloured table cloth for a writing table. All these can be sent directly by post to the Bombay Secretariat from Allahabad. There is nothing to wreck, and there is no point in your taking the trouble to carry them yourself to the Secretariat.

In my last letter I sent you a longish list of books. Please add to this Kalidasa's *Meghaduta*,⁸² in Sanskrit. Also a pad of notepaper

82. A drama in which a banished spirit from heaven implores a cloud to convey a message to his celestial mate, and describes the countries over which it will have to pass.

and envelopes to match. And a calendar for 1943. Why not ask the booksellers to send the books direct to the Secretariat saying they are doing so at your instance? They can pack them up properly and save you the trouble of hanging about the Secretariat corridors.

You should not have thrown away the payment order on Bachhraj. You should cash both the orders I have sent and make the necessary payments out of them.

Love,

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

January 20

Had a tooth extracted today.

January 26th Tuesday—Independence Day!

The thirteenth anniversary or the fourteenth celebration. How long ago it seems since that first Independence Day of 1930! Inevitably, I thought of these years that had gone by with all their ups and downs, their sorrow and travail.

We had a little celebration here—a simple affair and yet, not without its own solemnity and depth of feeling. At five this afternoon we all met together—the twelve of us—and Maulana spoke for a while appropriately enough. Then we all stood up for a few minutes and in silence, repeated the pledge to ourselves. We did not have the wording of the pledge, nor was it necessary. Vallabhbbhai then spoke for a few minutes and I followed. And so the function ended, having lasted just twenty-five minutes.

I thought of the outside world, of what was happening all over India today. Surely there would be a celebration in many places in spite of all the terrorism of government—celebration with their inevitable accompaniments of lathi-charges, shootings, deaths, injuries and arrests. What a terrible burden our friends and colleagues outside have to carry! It is easy enough for us, though waves of unhappiness may pass over us from time to time and distress us. The future distresses me more than the present. The cloven foot—or feet—of Britain's rulers and even of those who count in America,—becomes more & more evident.

A favourable turn in the war situation makes them talk again pompously and unctuously of their imperial responsibilities. How sickening all this hypocrisy and cant are, especially from the mouths of those who take pride in being labour & leftist & advanced!⁸³ It was well that we refused all cooperation to this crowd. Only lackeys and the lowest type of opportunist politician can cooperate on these conditions. For us it would have been despicable, dishonourable, worse than death—murder of our ideals and objectives, flagrant breach of our pledges, and the extinction of all we have stood by and held dear. What will happen to India or the world I do not know, but it could never have been well either for us or for India to agree to this dishonour and murder. I feel sure that we chose the right way to serve India & the world. Perhaps in minor matters we erred and we might have set about it differently. But in essentials we were dead right.

The only thing that troubles me sometimes is the effect on China of what we have done. And yet I feel they must understand and largely appreciate our position.

x x x x

I thought of Indu—From all accounts not even books are allowed to political prisoners & detenus in the U.P. Also no interviews, no letters. The U.P. Govt.'s. or Hallett's⁸⁴ way of revenging itself. All these restrictions can hardly have any other meaning or purpose. Is it then just malice—a touch of sadism? Or a reaction from fear and shattered nerves? It must be hard on our colleagues in the U.P. prisons, especially the girls and women.

x x x x

I thought of Bapu—so obvious and yet the man of mystery. What was he thinking or preparing to do. As the leader and the person responsible for all recent developments in the Congress, he can hardly remain a passive spectator, as many of us might. What a big man he is in spite of everything, and whatever the future may hold, it has been a rare privilege to work with him.

x x x x

83. The Labour Party and the Trade Union Congress issued on 12 August 1942 a statement which said that the "Congress movement will seriously endanger not merely Indian freedom but the freedom of the whole world."

84. Maurice Garnier Hallett (1886-1960); Home Secretary, Government of India, 1932-36; Governor of Bihar, 1937-39, Governor of United Provinces, 1939-45.

My mind travelled to Sind where a few days ago a young boy, Hemu,⁸⁵ aged 20 was sent to the scaffold by a martial law court for the offence of tampering, or attempting to tamper, with railway lines. He was a college student, recently matriculated. Whether his offence was properly proved or not—little proof is needed by a military tribunal functioning under martial law—I do not know. But this execution struck me as something which will have far-reaching consequences all over India, especially among the young. The blood of Hemu and others will long stand witness.

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And so back to Independence Day and an India in prison and in shackles and full of impotent anger—and yet not so impotent and certainly not submissive.

On the whole I felt rather cheerful today and full of energy.

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Asaf Ali has been in the dumps for some days. Partly ill health, partly his general outlook, chiefly news that a reward had been offered for Aruna's arrest.⁸⁶ He has been worrying about Aruna and rather angry at her avoiding arrest and thus becoming an absconder in the eyes of the law. It is natural enough for him to worry. But Aruna has gone up greatly in my estimation. What she has done or is doing, I do not know. But deliberately she has chosen the harder, riskier, more dangerous path when it was easy enough for her to go to prison. She has shown grit & determination & rare courage. May it be well with her! If there are many others like her, it will be well with all of us.

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My companions are not flourishing physically here. Pattabhi suddenly, very suddenly developed diabetes—and an advanced stage too. Narendra Dev has his periodic attacks of asthma. Mahmud is a bundle of diseases but his chief trouble now relates to his eyes.

Pantji & Kripalani also have their troubles, and so has Asaf Ali. Vallabhbai carries on only by taking great care of himself.

85. Hemu Kalani, a student leader of Sukkur, was sentenced to death on 21 January 1943 for an alleged attempt to sabotage a military train. .

86. The government had declared Aruna an absconder, auctioned her belongings and offered a prize of Rs. 5,000 for her capture.

Those who are more or less well are Shanker Rao, Profulla Ghose & Mahtab.

Maulana is also well in a way but he has lost 22 pounds of weight since he came here. That loss of weight is deliberate in a way and partly due to the unsuitability of the food.

Probably I am the healthiest of the party, even though I have lost a tooth as well as 7 or 8 pounds of weight

x x x x

Where will I be next Independence Day? Even chances of our continuing here till then! Indeed, I am inclined to think the chances are in favour of it. We shall see, probably, 1943 through in Ahmad-nagar Fort. But not 1944—So I think.

x x x x

A note in *The Hindu* said that Indu had now been permitted to write to me. Since then I have been a little excited and expectant—Nothing has come so far from her.

Jan. 29, Friday

Yesterday a letter from Tara which pleased me.

x x x x

Pattabhi's sudden exhibition of symptoms of diabetes has somewhat upset our Superintendent, Major M. Sendak. All of us are being examined and overhauled afresh. Today my blood pressure was taken. It was 120-84. Previously, about three months ago or more, it was 118-72.

January 29, 1943

TO NAYANTARA PANDIT⁸⁷

Darling Tara,

I was happy to get your letter, which reached me yesterday, and to have news of you and Rita. It amused me to read that you consider yourself a very queer person and not at all a lovable type. I was not aware of this. Indeed I would have given an exactly opposite opinion. I have found nothing queer about you and have thought you very lovable. Personally, I like you enormously and I do not think I am queer! So do not imagine all sorts of things which do not exist. The fact of the matter is that the world we live in is all awry and upside down and it is not an easy matter to fit into it, especially for those who are sensitive. Our lives have become so abnormal that we lose balance and perspective and cannot judge matters correctly. This applies to big things and small as well as to our individual selves. It is not normal for most of us to spend our lives in prison cut off from our families and dear ones. It should not be normal for intelligent human beings to spend all their strength and energy in killing each other off, as they are doing today all over the world. It should not be normal for people to starve and others to get indigestion through overeating. In India, especially it just amazes me to see the abnormalities and oddities today—and the oddest thing of all, often enough, is the mind of man.

There is an advantage, however, in living through abnormal times when everything is changing. Those who are lacking in courage and are poor in spirit fear such times for they love security above everything. But for others, new ways and avenues open out, which, though full of risk and danger, yet carry the promise of a better world, and of adventure there is plenty. Life, without adventure and risk, is a full dull affair.

So do not worry, my dear, especially about yourself. You are right enough. Think of all the big and worthwhile things you may have to do later on when your time comes to face this life of adventure in earnest. Meanwhile, carry on and get sound in body and mind.

I am glad you understood and appreciated what I wrote about Ladli Bhai. There was no question of course of your not being old enough or capable enough of looking after Anand Bhawan. So far as I am

87. Nayantara Sahgal Papers.

concerned you are perfectly capable of doing so. I do not even know exactly what Ladli Bhai wanted to do. It was quite possible that this was unnecessary. But, even so, it is always better for us to show a certain respect to the elders of the family. Often there is a world of difference between the outlook of the old generation and the new, and it is difficult for one to understand the other.

Every generation has to face that problem. That makes it all the more necessary for us to avoid unnecessary friction. Tempers get frayed easily enough and old age brings a certain testiness. Let us bear with this and not add to it, for temper is such a waste of energy, apart from being rather bad form.

I am glad our garden is looking lovely. Here also we have worked hard and made a bit of a garden. It is not much to shout about, but then we are all amateur gardeners here.

I should love to have Papu's translation of *Ritu-samhar*,⁸⁸ if it is possible for it to reach me.

So you have been reading Andre Maurois' *Byron*. He has written a better book on Shelley, called *Ariel*, and Shelley is, I think, a far more lovable and admirable character than Byron. I have a link with Byron. He went to the same school and college—Harrow and Trinity College, Cambridge. In Harrow, on the top of the Hill, there is a fine view from a churchyard and there Byron is supposed to have gone frequently. I used to go there sometimes and read some lines of Byron which are engraved on stone there. In Trinity College library there was a very fine marble statue of Byron. It is difficult to like Byron. He was so amazingly selfish and self-centred.

Your question about the last of the Moghals has set my mind thinking about past happenings and musing about the strange and sad ways of this world of ours. The Chinese have, I think, a saying which applies peculiarly to empires and imperial dynasties—'they come with a roar of a lion and pass away like the tail of a snake.' So empires have come and gone in the past, so they will pass in the future, till there are no empires and imperial dynasties left.

The story of the last days of the Moghal imperial line—the dynasty of Timur as it is called—is a sad one, for a contrast between past greatness and present misery is always sad. But the later Moghals were a played-out dynasty with no trace of greatness about them. Bahadur Shah was a decent person and an Urdu and Persian poet of some repute, but there was nothing very kingly about him. Weak and

88. *Ritu-samhara* (Seasonal cycle); a long poem by Kalidasa describing the six seasons of the year in all their changing aspects.

feeble, with no power and no capacity to fight for it, he yet had dignity and the cultured ways of a cultured though decadent court.

He was treated very badly by the British and the promises made to him were not kept. One of his own cousins (Ilahi Baksh, I think, his name was) played him false and betrayed him, lured on by the hope that the British might recognize him (Ilahi Baksh) as Bahadur Shah's successor. But traitors get scant respect even from those they serve and Ilahi Baksh fared ill.

Bahadur Shah was sent to Rangoon and there he lived in abject poverty for a few years before he died. He was nearly 80 when he died. He was given a pension of Rs. 50/- a month by the Government! After his death even his tomb was not known to the public and it was over fifty years later that a certain broken-down tomb near Bahadur Shah's little house in Rangoon, was pointed out as his tomb. But there is no certainty of this. When I was in Rangoon I paid a visit to this tomb.

Bahadur Shah had four sons, one of these was by a youngish wife Zinat Mahal. Zinat was anxious that her son, Jawan Bakht, should succeed to his father, in preference to his older brothers who had another mother or mothers. There was little to succeed to for the glory had departed and the rest was vanishing fast enough. Nevertheless there was plenty of palace intrigues. The eldest son, who was the heir-apparent, died under suspicious circumstances. Soon afterwards came the upheaval of 1857, called the Indian Mutiny. Bahadur Shah's two remaining grown-up sons were shot down in cold blood by Hodson⁸⁹ of Hodson's Horse. Bahadur Shah, his wife Zinat Mahal and their young son Jawan Bakht were later sent to Rangoon. None of them was allowed to come to India. Jawan Bakht had a son who, when he grew up, was ultimately permitted to visit Lucknow in search of a bride. He got a wife there and returned to Rangoon. They had a son. Just about 20 years ago, this little boy, aged 8 or so, was being taken round by his mother's father to various places in India begging for financial assistance. Whether this boy is alive or dead now I do not know, but I have a faint notion that he died recently.

So vanished the Moghals and the line of Timur in India, hardly leaving a trace except in history and past events. Of course Bahadur Shah's family as a whole was a large one and there must be plenty of people about who are distantly related to him. But all of them have

89. Major Hodson; during the revolt of 1857 he raised an irregular army of cavalry which came to be known as Hodson's Horse at the head of which he was present at the siege of Delhi.

lost themselves in the sea of Indian humanity. Possibly a careful inquirer might find some ragged, broken down individuals in Delhi, or even in Lucknow, who claim descent or relationship with the great Moghals.

I have given you a bit of history which will not be found in the books. It has little importance, except a sentimental one, and yet it makes me think. Bahadur Shah himself, musing on the turning of fate's wheel, has written a number of sad verses in Urdu.

You will remember that Papu translated the *Mudra Rakshasa*,⁹⁰ a little over a year ago. I was told this translation was going to be published in Bombay. Could you find out whether this has come out or not. Do not take any trouble over the matter but, if you have the chance, find out from Papu.

With my love to you and Rita,

Your loving
Mamu⁹¹

30.1.43

Darling Bets,

Since I wrote to you last I have got rid of a tooth. For weeks or months past this was giving some trouble. Not much, or else I would have taken more urgent measures. Ultimately I decided to part with it and I have felt better since then.

I am slowly getting used to the electric shaver and like it on the whole. I do not think still that it is an improvement on a really good blade, but it has certain definite advantages in these days of lack of blades.

Tara wrote to me that she and Rita had had an interview with Feroze who was well. This intrigued me. There was no mention of an interview with Nan, Ranjit or Chand.

You suggest that I might send my wrist watch for repairs. I think this is a good idea. My little alarm clock has also suddenly stopped functioning. I shall send both of them on Monday (today is Saturday). The alarm clock can be given to any good watchmaker. But

90. The Ogre and the Signet Ring, a Sanskrit political drama by Vishakhadatta relating to the history of Chandragupta.

91. The Bombay Government withheld this letter. Jawaharlal got it back after his release.

the wrist watch should only go to a Rolex agent, otherwise their responsibility will cease. I sent it once to Hamilton's in New Delhi but they refused to take it and referred me to Cooke and Kelvey (I think) who were the agents. The watch was purchased in Calcutta just under a year ago. It has never functioned satisfactorily except perhaps for a few weeks. It has been twice to Cooke and Kelvey in New Delhi and they have pottered about with it for some time. I am not quite sure about Cooke and Kelvey as Rajan used to take it. But anyway there is sure to be a Rolex agent in Bombay. I do not mind how long it takes for repairs but it must be put right.

Your inquiry about one of the books asked for by me is not surprising. I had never heard of Louisa Alcott's *Little Women*.⁹² A number of books mentioned by me are from a list prepared by Pearl Buck—books on America for non-Americans to read.

Do not trouble about my book—*Glimpses of World History*. There is no point in writing to Kitabistan about it. They have no special concern with it now and deal with it only as booksellers.

I am sorry about Raja's eyes—I hope it is possible for him to be examined by an eye specialist.

The weather is pleasant enough here so far, with a marked difference between the day and night temperature. Some of my companions complain occasionally of cold but for my part I miss the sharp cold of Allahabad and North India.

Send my love to Yunus⁹³ if you write to him.

Love,

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

Feb. 9. Tuesday Vasanta Panchami !

These last three days, Feb 6th onwards, have brought anniversaries and my mind has lived in the past. *Vasanta Panchami*

Feb. 6th 1931—Father's death

Feb. 6th 1916—My Wedding

92. Louisa May Alcott (1832–1888); American novelist who was famous as a writer of childrens stories. *Little Women* describes a normal, pleasant American family life.

93. Mohammad Yunus was arrested on 18 October 1942 at Peshawar.

Spring is in the air. The breeze smells different, and yesterday I noticed suddenly a chorus of birds—several new ones.

No letter yet from Indu. Yet news comes that letter writing has at last been permitted to detenus &c. in the U.P. Also books have been allowed. This appears from a letter received by Narendra Dev.

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Anniversaries! It is just six months today since our arrest and our arrival in Ahmadnagar Fort.

Maulana Azad's letter to the Viceroy⁹⁴

AHMEDNAGAR FORT, 13 Feb, 1943

Dear Lord Linlithgow,

My colleagues and I have read in yesterday's and the day before's newspapers the recent correspondence that has passed between you and Mahatma Gandhi. In the course of your letters to Mahatma Gandhi, numerous references have been made to the Congress and repeated and far-reaching charges have been made against the Congress organization. In your letter of January 13th you express your regret that no word of condemnation for the "violence and crime" should have come from the Working Committee.

Ordinarily, we would refrain from saying anything while we are kept in detention, cut off completely from our people and the outside world. Even our place of detention is supposed to be a secret which may not be mentioned or whispered to anyone. Our sources of information here are strictly limited and consist only of some newspapers which, under existing rules and ordinances, publish only censored news and are prohibited from giving publicity to many kinds of news which are of vital importance to us and the Indian people. In these circumstances it is obviously improper for us to give expression to any views in regard to events with which we are so ill-acquainted, especially when the only method of doing so, open to us, is to address the Government of India.

We have, therefore, avoided any such expression of views and have refrained from addressing you or any member of the Government of India, even though at times the most fantastic charges have been made against us and the organization we have the honour to represent. These

94. Drafted by Jawaharlal. Printed in *The Transfer of Power* 1942-47, Volume III, pp. 659-664.

charges have now been made even more explicitly and in an aggravated form in the course of your recent letters to Mahatma Gandhi. The tone and contents of these letters, more especially your letter⁹⁵ of February 5th, are such that it will perhaps serve no useful purpose for us to address you on the subject. Yet we cannot ignore the fact that the head of the present Government of India has made these charges. I am venturing, therefore, to write to you.

Your correspondence with Mahatma Gandhi raises a large number of issues, many of which have great importance. Normally, we would have our say in regard to them, but, at the present moment, it is not my desire to discuss all these. I wish to confine myself more especially to one issue, and to make it clear that, so far as we are concerned, both as individuals and in our corporate capacity, speaking on behalf of our organization, your charge that the Congress had organized a secret movement of violence is wholly false and without foundation.

There is a vital difference of opinion between you and us in regard to many matters and, unfortunately, this difference brings us into conflict. But, even so, as an English patriot and a lover of British freedom, it should not be impossible for you to appreciate how Indian patriots and lovers of India's freedom might feel; and it should be possible for some element of fair play and square dealing to be kept up in our relations with each other. To make serious charges against those who are prevented from replying to them; to make those charges without producing evidence; to support them by the vast propaganda machine of a powerful Government and, at the same time, to suppress news and views which are contrary to them, are not evidence either of fair play or a strong case.

In your letter of February 5th you refer to the Home Member's speech⁹⁶ in the Central Legislative Assembly for the charges made by him against the Congress. Further you say that "all the mass of evidence that has since come to light has confirmed the conclusions then reached". This procedure of reaching conclusions, and later to seek evidence to justify them, is not usually considered judicial or proper.

95. In this letter the Viceroy stated that charges were being prepared in respect of violence, and that Mahatma Gandhi and other Congress leaders would have to clear themselves before world opinion. "And if meanwhile, you yourself, by any action such as you now appear to be contemplating, attempt to find an easy way out, the judgement will go against you by default."
96. In his speech of 15 September 1942, the Home Member said that the utterances of Congress leaders on 8 August 1942 showed that "they knew and approved of what was likely to occur". "Their plans did contemplate" an organisation which "would be brought into play when they launched their mass movement."

In this letter of February 5th you further say that you "have ample information that the campaign of sabotage has been conducted under secret instructions circulated in the name of the All India Congress Committee." What your information is we do not know, but we do know and can state with authority that the A.I.C.C. at no time contemplated such a campaign, and never issued such instructions, secret or other. The A.I.C.C. was declared an unlawful association at the time of our arrest and practically all prominent and responsible Congressmen, including the members of the A.I.C.C., were arrested at the same time. The A.I.C.C. office and other Congress offices were seized by the police. Since then the A.I.C.C. cannot obviously function.

You mention that an underground Congress organization exists now and that the wife of a member of the Congress Working Committee is a member of it. We know nothing about such an organization and are not in a position to find out. But we are convinced that no Congress organizations and no responsible Congressman or Congresswoman can be "actively engaged in planning the bomb outrages and other acts of terrorism." Congressmen, no doubt, consider it their duty to carry on civil resistance, under certain circumstances, to the best of their ability, but this has nothing in common with the charges you have made. It is possible that in the mind of the average official or policeman, there is no particular difference between civil disobedience and bomb outrages, &c. But we have no doubt in our minds, knowing our people as we do, that responsible Congressmen cannot possibly encourage in any way bomb outrages and terroristic acts.

A great deal is said about secret evidence which the Government claims to possess but which it does not produce. May I draw your attention to the public speeches delivered by Mahatma Gandhi at the last meeting of the A.I.C.C. on August 8th, a few hours before his arrest, wherein he emphasized with all solemnity his appeal for nonviolence?⁹⁷ The Congress adopted this policy of nonviolence twenty-three years ago and, despite popular lapses occasionally, has met with a great measure of success in regard to it. This will be evident from a comparison of the Indian national movement with national movements in other countries, which have often openly based themselves on violence. You have, no doubt, yourself approved of violence in many forms when you have considered that it was used for a right cause. The Congress, however, has

97. Mahatma Gandhi had stressed that "ours is not a drive for power, but purely a nonviolent fight for India's freedom."

adhered to its creed and practice of nonviolence and has for these twenty-three years preached this method to the people. If the Congress decides to change its policy and method and to function in this matter like other nationalist organizations, it would do so openly and deliberately by changing its creed to that effect. There would be no secrecy for, apart from other valid reasons, a conflict between public and secret advice weakens and stultifies an organization which is based essentially on action and constructive endeavour. The Congress may have many faults, but it has not been accused of lack of courage in the pursuit of its objectives and ideals.

I would suggest to you to consider what the result in India might have been if the Congress had deliberately instigated and encouraged violence and sabotage. Surely the Congress is widespread enough and influential enough to have produced a situation a hundred times worse than anything that has so far happened.

In the summer of 1940, when France fell and England was facing dire peril, Congress, which had previously been thinking in terms of direct action, deliberately avoided this, in spite of a strong demand for it. It did so entirely because it did not want to take advantage of a critical international situation or to encourage Nazi aggression in any way. Nothing could have been easier than for the Congress, during these critical days, to produce a situation of the utmost embarrassment to the Government.

For many months prior to our arrest we had been pointing out in Working Committee resolutions and otherwise, that public feeling in the country had grown exceedingly bitter against the British Government in India. Not only we, but many moderate leaders stated publicly that they had never previously known such bitterness. Responsible Congressmen tried to divert this feeling into peaceful channels and largely succeeded in doing so. They would have succeeded even more if events had not taken place which suddenly exasperated the public and, at the same time, removed all prominent and well-known leaders who might have been [able] to control the situation. These events are better known to you than to us, situated as we are, but we have learnt enough to realise what the shock to the public must have been. Wholesale arrests were followed immediately by the prohibition and prevention of all public activity or public expression of opinion, by lathi charges, tear-gas bombs and shooting. Well-known leaders were spirited away and their destinations were kept secret. Rumours of death and illness spread and added to the public excitement and resentment. This apparently was the background of happenings during the second week of August last.

I do not wish to deal here with subsequent events, for an adequate consideration of them would require fuller knowledge than we possess here. But I would like you to consider what the effect on the Indian people must have been of all that has been done to them, on behalf of the Government, since our arrest, and how large numbers of people must have been driven to desperation.

Reference has been made in the Government communique, accompanying the recently published correspondence, to a certain circular which is said to have been issued by the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee. We know nothing of this and cannot believe that improper instructions, against the fundamental principles of the Congress, could have been issued by a responsible Congress authority. It is worthy of note, however, that even official references to this circular contradict themselves. The first mention of it was made in a press note issued by the Government of Madras on August 29th. In this it was stated that the circular contained instructions, *inter alia*, for the removal of rails. Two weeks later, Mr. Amery, speaking in the House of Commons, stated that this circular expressly said that "rails should not be removed and that there should be no danger to life." This is an instructive and significant instance of how evidence is made up and used to influence people.

In your letter of February 5th, in referring to the A.I.C.C. resolution, you draw attention to the concluding part in it which authorised all Congressmen to act for themselves in the event of interference with the leadership of the movement. This has appeared significant to you and you have drawn certain conclusions from it. You are evidently unaware that similar instructions were given when previous civil disobedience movements were started. Even during the individual civil disobedience movement of 1940-41, these instructions were repeated by me on many occasions. It is of the essence of civil disobedience or satyagraha that individuals should become self-sufficient units, should need arise, as leaders are always likely to be removed and isolated at an early stage. In the present instance the phase of civil disobedience was in fact not reached.

It is curious that in a fairly lengthy correspondence, and in various official statements, nothing is said about the merits of the resolution passed by the A.I.C.C., which dealt with the national and international situation and made it clear that a free India would not only resist invasion to the utmost, but would throw all her resources into the world struggle for freedom and align herself with the United Nations. This was made perfectly clear in the resolution itself; it was further emphasized by me, speaking as President, and by many other speakers. It

must be known to you that ever since the early beginnings of fascist, Japanese and Nazi aggressions in Africa, Asia and Europe, the Congress has consistently condemned them. No organization in India or elsewhere has been so clear and emphatic on this subject. The Congress was anti-fascist and anti-Nazi when the British Government under Mr. Chamberlain's leadership was openly friendly to these regimes. The A.I.C.C. resolution of August last was especially based on this anti-Axis policy and, in particular, on the urgent necessity of strengthening India's defence against invasion. It was made clear, and I emphasized this on that occasion, that an acid test of the change was this defence of India and strengthening of the United Nations.

It may also be known to you that several members of the present British Government have in the past repeatedly supported or welcomed fascist and Japanese aggression.

You conclude your letter to Mahatma Gandhi by saying that the charges against the Congress will have to be met sooner or later. We shall welcome that day when we can face the peoples of the world and leave the verdict to them. On that day others also, including the British Government, will have to meet and answer charges. I trust they will also welcome that day.

I apologise for the length of this letter. I felt that I owed it to you, as well as to myself and my colleagues, to be perfectly frank and to deny with all vehemence the false charges that have been repeatedly advanced against the Congress.

This letter has been written on Saturday afternoon, February 13th. I am told that, like all other communications sent from here, it will have to be despatched under registered cover to the Government of Bombay. As registration is not possible on Sunday, it will thus have to be sent on Monday and it may not reach you for some days. I regret this delay.

Yours sincerely,
A.K. Azad

February 15, Monday

Sixth day of Bapu's fast!⁹⁸ Four days since we heard of it—four days of reversal of our routine and mental upsets.

I remembered the day in Dehra Dun Jail, about ten years ago, when I first heard of Bapu's fast on the untouchability question. How vastly excited and upset I was.⁹⁹ It was so totally unexpected and the future became dark.

On this occasion there was no such violent reaction though of course it was all very disturbing. Why? Partly, I suppose, because I am older and more thick-skinned; more hardened to blows; more used to disasters and sorrow. These last ten years have had these in abundance.

Partly, I think, because the news was not so unexpected after all. At the back of my mind I knew he would fast some time or other, though when it actually came, it was unexpected. From Bapu's point of view there was no other way—he simply had to fast or to allow matters to take their own course.

Yet it was disturbing enough, and the mind wandered and thought of all the various possibilities—none very pleasing. Even his possible release in present circumstances not satisfying.

The main question: Will he survive? Not more than a fifty-fifty chance. In fact the odds against it—Possibly when he has arrived at a really dangerous stage he will be released—what then? And if he dies—what then?

Yesterday the Maulana sent a letter to the Viceroy. No mention of the fast—only an answer to and a repudiation of the charges against the Congress made by him. Drafting and consideration of this long letter took two days. Much of the burden fell on me. For a while I got back into the old ways of drafting W.C. resolutions or letters. I sat up one night till after 1 a.m. making the first draft.

No one particularly satisfied with the letter as sent—not even I! Not an easy matter to meet various viewpoints. Some indeed were not in favour of sending the letter at all.

For my part I got a little tired of the discussion and felt that it did not matter very much after all what was written—short of some obviously wrong thing. We have gone far beyond the letter stage. Other

98. Mahatma Gandhi undertook a 21-day fast from 10 February 1943 in protest against the Government's accusation that he was responsible for the disturbances in the country after 9 August 1942. He also considered the fast as a measure of self-purification.

99. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 5, pp. 407-410.

forces will decide the issue and they may take a long time in doing it. What new forces are at work in India today? I can only guess but it seems to me that India is going the way of Ireland in the later Sinn Féin days—with the outbreak of 'Troubles' after the last war.¹⁰⁰ Violence—nonviolence become academical questions. Who are we to blame those who indulge in violence today, not knowing what horror they have to face? Yet, these petty bomb outrages reported in the press are distressing.

If Bapu dies then this drift to a repetition of Ireland on a much larger scale will be swift.

What of us, sitting here, helpless and angry at our impotence? Have we also had our day and are back numbers now?

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No letter from Indu though it is clear now that she can write to me. Betty wrote to me that she had a letter to this effect from the U.P. Government.

16.2.43

Darling Betty,

I have received your letter of February 4th—also the books, khadi, and other articles sent by you. There was no mishap. I am so sorry to give you such a lot of trouble over books. It is easy enough to make a list of them and send it to you, and then you have to hunt high and low for them and waste a great deal of time and energy. I shall be more careful in future. But in any event, please do not take any special trouble in the matter. If a book is not easily available, drop it.

I notice that you have gathered some of these books from distant places—Travancore and Hyderabad. What a job! Do not repeat this performance. Tell Chinni I shall certainly not throw away his father's books and thank him for them. I do not know Chinni's age but I imagine I have known his father for almost as long a time as he has

100. In the 1918 U.K. elections Sinn Féiners won 73 of the 105 Irish seats, but refused to sit at Westminster, and instead established the first Irish Republican Parliament in Dublin. Their army waged a guerrilla war against the British forces. Then followed a period of murder and reprisals throughout 1920–21. The British Government loosed on Ireland the forces known as "Blacks and Tans" which resulted in the closer welding of the rebels into the Irish Republican Army.

known him, though of course not so intimately and well! I first saw C.P.¹⁰¹ just over thirty years ago!

Thank Chinni also for the hand-made note paper. Nym Wales's book¹⁰² has also reached me. You mention that there are two other books in the *Little Women* series.¹⁰³ Do not trouble to send them. One is enough for me and this was asked for because Pearl Buck recommended it.

I have no desire to send you further lists of books, at least for a long time. But I shall mention one for you to keep in mind for some future date when you might be sending me something. This is Ranjit's translation of the *Rajatarangini—The River of Kings*. There are some hundreds of copies of this lying about Swaraj Bhawan, and some in Anand Bhawan. But I suppose the Swaraj Bhawan books are out of reach. My own personal copy is in my room in Anand Bhawan under the bronze Buddha. You can drop a line to Ladli Bhai to have this sent directly or if it is easier for you, you can send your own copy. In either case there is no hurry.

I have seen K.T. Shah's little book on planning.¹⁰⁴ I am glad he has had it published, and I would like him to go ahead with such publications. In fact I told him so when I last saw him. As for the Planning Committee's office, it would certainly be desirable for it to be carried on, on however moderate a scale. I do not think it costs much. I should like to contribute to this myself if I could, but that is hardly possible for me from here—I am not sure about the desirability of your writing to Ambalal on this subject. You can judge for yourself. Anyway inform Shah how I feel about the matter.

Some two months ago I read in a newspaper that Indu had been given permission to write to me, or rather to write to her relations. This was a message of a Delhi correspondent.¹⁰⁵ Some days later a further message appeared to the effect that I had been allowed to write to her. As a matter of fact I had not heard anything about it. Now you inform me that the U.P. Government has written to you officially

101. C.P. Ramaswami Iyer.

102. *China Builds for Democracy*; for Jawaharlal's foreword to this book see *Selected Works*, Vol. 12, pp. 568-571.

103. *Good Wives and Little Men*.

104. *Principles of Economic Planning*; it outlines a scheme for India's regeneration which, according to the author, should reconcile village and industrial economy.

105. "The Government of India have permitted the members of the C.W.C. to correspond with members of their families on personal and domestic matters only and any such letter addressed to Mrs. Pandit and Mrs. Indira Gandhi will be delivered and they will be permitted to reply subject to the same restriction about subject matter."



TEARGASSING OF SATYAGRAHIS IN BOMBAY, AUGUST 1942

August 9th 5:15 am. Later comes into my

room and wakes me: "The police have come."
So I get lost. The incident has come - I am in a
dilemma. I was sound asleep but I became wide-awake
immediately. What do I do? We were only going to
follow the old procedure, we had made other arrangements
which I submit is this, just my quality or refuse to go.
Refused with reluctance, but I am going to do it - an
individual matter. What instance was put of this, when
we were first notified. I am not sure, any way, I say it
as well as I can, it is not a fault. I would like to see
in it, has been mostly my.

Then I am brought, a number of minutes to meet a
note, but I am not many times also last morning. Part
of the day I go to see early and had another to come to the
the other side of the river! And it is not the
same. The Methodist men left behind last day, and it
is a very long time.

on the subject. I have been expecting to hear from her all this time but no letter has come.

You need not imagine that any letter from you will clash with hers. I was informed in September last that one could receive four letters a week and write two letters a week. As a matter of fact I have been writing to you every two or three weeks—less than twice a month—and I have received about the same number of letters from you.

I am anxious about Raja's eyes. I do wish they could be properly examined and treated. Anyway he must rest them.

I am writing to you about various matters but our minds are naturally preoccupied at present with one issue—Bapu. I hope it will be well with him and with India.

My love to you and the children.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

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February 17, Wednesday.

Life goes on more or less as usual but on a quieter level. There is a little less laughter and shouting and a more urgent sense of possible tragedy. Tragedy of course there is all over the world on the biggest scale; yet one has got hardened and used to it. Still any one event may bring sharper perception and quicken the pain.

I doubt if any one of us believes that Bapu will die because of this fast. Whether the wish is father to the thought, or because of some other reasons, we convince ourselves that something surely will happen. Either he will fast for the full 21 days and survive or, if his condition becomes dangerous, he will be released. Even so, the thought of his possible death always hovers in the background. And this again gives rise to innumerable other chains of thought.

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All his letters¹⁰⁶ to the Viceroy, good enough in a way, are disappointing to me. What a difference in tone from his pre-arrest utterances!¹⁰⁷ There was fire then and sparks of electricity flew about from his words and phrases. Now also there is certainly strength and firmness of purpose, but also a tone of justification, of defence, of legal reasoning. It is not the ringing language of defiance, come what may. As usual, perhaps he reflects the mood of the country.

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Why did he not speak and write about the international situation in terms of the last A.I.C.C. resolution during the months preceding it? His intense nationalism and despair of the British overshadowed all other issues and he referred to other matters in a way which confused people and led foreigners to believe that he was pro-Japanese. This was not so, I knew, but then he gave a weapon to our opponents which they flourish at every opportunity. All this gave a background to our struggle. He himself saw that some of his utterances had been unwise and likely to mislead. He corrected¹⁰⁸ them in July and laid the right emphasis on other matters. But the harm had been done.

x x x x

106. Mahatma Gandhi's fast was preceded by correspondence for six weeks between him and the Viceroy. On 31 December 1942, he wrote to the Viceroy declaring his intention to "crucify the flesh by fasting" in protest against the assumption that he and the Congress were responsible for the violence after 8 August 1942, and asked that either he should be convinced of his error, or he and the Congress leaders should be exonerated of the charge. The Viceroy replied that he still held the Congress responsible for what had taken place and insisted on not only an admission of guilt, but assurances for the future. The correspondence ended with Mahatma Gandhi's countercharge that the Viceroy had "condemned men and women before trying them and hearing their defence."
107. Mahatma Gandhi's statements before his arrest were marked by such expressions as "open rebellion", "short and swift", "fight to the finish," and "do or die." His last message stated: "It is only when individuals go out to seek and face death that the nation will survive."
108. Mahatma Gandhi's letter to Chiang Kai-shek in July 1942 stated that he would "take no hasty action, and whatever action is taken will be governed by the consideration that it should not injure China or encourage Japanese aggression in China or India. I am straining every nerve to avoid a conflict with British authority". On 26 July 1942 he published an open letter to "Every Japanese" in the *Harijan*. "I would rather be shot than submit to the Japanese or any other power." He warned the Japanese that they would meet a hostile nation if ever they invaded India, and warned the Indians against 'the error of thinking that the Japanese would be welcomed as friends and deliverers."

Does this matter after all? Not much, I suppose, in a larger perspective. Struggle between Indian nationalism & British imperialism is inevitable in the nature of things. But it is a pity that even our friends, or some of them, should be deluded and confused.

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What has happened since our arrest and all that the representatives of the British Govt. have said and done during this period, has, to my thinking, justified our non-cooperative attitude. How can there be any cooperation with this crowd? I cannot see myself, whatever happens, cooperating with them—Britishers and Indians—who have displayed themselves so clearly in these days of crisis.

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When there was talk of our release in November–Dec. 1941 towards the end of the individual C.D. movement, Bapu wrote and publicly stated that he did not want it. He made it clear that release would make no difference.¹⁰⁹ Still we were released early in December 1941. Within a day or two of my release came Pearl Harbour¹¹⁰ & the Pacific War.

Now Bapu in effect wants his release.¹¹¹ Why so? And what can we do if released? The only reason that I can think of is that he is distressed at remaining a passive spectator of events, especially when those events are not pleasing. He must act. As he cannot act normally unless he is released, he is fasting, thus certainly forcing some action on people. That seems to be the psychological explanation.

But on the political plane what does all this mean? I do not know and this utter lack of knowledge is distressing. I do not like being thrown out on uncharted seas of action. It is bad enough to have to face the uncertainties and chances of human affairs. But there is no help for it; one has to face them. To add to them a kind of activity

109. On 3 December 1941, the Government announced the release of all those political prisoners who, like Jawaharlal, were guilty of only "symbolic" offences. Mahatma Gandhi said that the announcement did not "evoke a single responsive or appreciative chord" in him.

110. Japan bombed Pearl Harbour on 7 December 1941 and launched a series of simultaneous offensives against Shanghai, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaya and U.S. military bases from the Philippines to Hawaii.

111. When the Viceroy offered to release him during the period of his fast, Mahatma Gandhi replied that if he were released without conditions he might not fast.

which appears to have little to do with reason or logic and is probably based on emotion, makes matters much worse.

I remember the turmoil I was in nearly ten years ago, or was it nine?, in Alipur Jail, when news came of Bapu's statement on the Behar earthquake &c.¹¹² So many other statements of his come to my mind. It is all a curious mix-up. Is this inherent in the satyagraha method.

Yet, in spite of all this, I am far less disturbed than I was in Alipur or previously in Dehra Dun—Is this just resignation or a deliberate toughening of my texture? What does it matter after all what happens? So much evil and misfortune shadow the world that a little more or less does not make much difference. One thing cannot be taken from us—to act with courage and dignity and to stick to ideals. But that is hardly the politician's way.

Are we politicians? I suppose so. But not very pliable or opportunist enough to be successful as such. The real politician type is Jinnah, or the honourable members of the Viceroy's Council!

x x x x

What will happen if Bapu dies? An end of an era in India and a bitterness that will eat into the very soul of India. The last chance of any settlement or compromise with Britain will go, on any basis—perhaps the chance has already gone. It will be war in every way then, war continuously whatever the ups and downs might be.

x x x x

If he survives, either in detention or outside—what then? Anticlimax!

No, I do not like the prospects either way.

x x x x

Asaf Ali has been very unhappy for some time past, and more especially since the Gandhi-Viceroy correspondence was published with its reference¹¹³ to Aruna. He has made himself quite ill. I am very sorry

112. On 24 January 1934, Mahatma Gandhi said "... a man like me cannot but believe that this earthquake is a divine chastisement sent by God for our sins."

113. The Viceroy in his letter of 5 February 1943 had alleged that "the wife of a member of the Congress Working Committee" (Aruna Asaf Ali) had been playing a prominent part in an underground movement "engaged in bomb outrages and terrorism." Mahatma Gandhi replied on 7 February that she should be tried before a court of law and punished if found guilty. "The lady you refer to could only have done things attributed to her after the wholesale arrests of 9th August last, which I have dared to describe as leonine violence."

for him. How would I have felt if Kamala or Indu had functioned in this way and I in prison? I wonder.

February 25. Thursday

Fifteen days of Bapu's fast over and six more to go through. Three days ago the end seemed very near. Life seemed to be ebbing out and even I came to the conclusion that there was no hope of survival. Indeed, one evening, a vague rumour spread that he had actually died.¹¹⁴ It was soon contradicted. We lived through these hard days quietly, always with a sense of impending disaster. Two of us—Asaf Ali and Mahmud—suggested that we might do something. There was not much to be done, but not attempting even the very little that was possible was wrong. What could we do? Address the Viceroy or send a message to Bapu (through Govt. of course and only if they are agreeable to forwarding it)? Both these courses were ruled out and all of us, barring Asaf & Mahmud to some extent, were clear that our only course was to remain silent. If the catastrophe occurred, then we could no longer remain silent. What then? Impossible to decide now.

So we spent these long & weary days almost prepared for the worst and yet dreading the future. It was no good finding fault with what Bapu had done in the past. The past was done with—what of the future?

Then suddenly the tension was lessened. He seemed to have turned the corner, or so it appears. Today's news¹¹⁵ was unexpectedly good and so we all felt a little more light-hearted today.

Six more days! And then? And then?

I had a brief letter from Betty today, written just after her return from a visit to Bapu.

114. On 21 February 1943, an official communique stated that Mahatma Gandhi was extremely weak and if the fast was not ended without delay, it would be too late to save his life.

115. The medical bulletin stated that though his heart was weak, he was out of danger.

February 28—Sunday.

Seven years today since Kamala died at a little village or suburb of Lausanne! How vividly I remember those days at Badenweiler and Lausanne, and then my mind goes back to the earlier days of our marriage. I do not think so often of the later years, perhaps because they were mostly spent away from her—in prison. But bright patches stand out—our visit to Europe in 1926-27; 1930 and our close comradeship during the early months of that year, and later, the exhilarating news that came to me in Naini Prison of her extraordinary activities and organising ability, the lovely interlude in Ceylon in 1931 and our holiday in South India—Malabar especially; of the eight days I was with her in October 1930 between two imprisonments; of the brief period, also between two imprisonments in 1933-34, and of the last goodbye with the police waiting to take me away; and then my visits to her at Bhowali.

All this seems so long ago, like some old story that I read and was impressed by; and yet, sometimes, it seems but yesterday and it becomes a little difficult to realise that she is not here.

x

x

x

x

Only three days more, or to be accurate, three nights and two days, before Bapu breaks his fast. It seems almost certain now that he will pull through. Wonderful old man! How he has again stirred to its uttermost depths the heart of India! The demand for his release has grown and grown till it became a passionate cry from every part of India.¹¹⁶ I am glad the British Govt. resisted this and refused to release him.¹¹⁷

116. There were demands for Mahatma Gandhi's release in the Central Assembly and by the Communist Party of India, the Trade Union Congress and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry. An All-Party Leaders Conference demanded on 20 February 1942 his immediate release. Three members of the Viceroy's Executive Council resigned on the issue of the fast. Special meetings and prayer meetings were held all over the country appealing to the Viceroy for his release. There were hartals in many industrial and urban centres.

117. The Government in a communique stated that it had "decided last August that Mr. Gandhi and other leaders of the Congress must be detained for reasons which have been fully explained and are well understood. The reasons for that decision have not ceased to exist. . . . There can be no justification for discriminating between Mr. Gandhi and other Congress leaders. The responsibility therefore rests entirely with Mr. Gandhi himself."

It seems almost inhuman to say so, and now that he is pulling through, one can just think this way. But, in the long run, it is good that the vast difference between the people of India and the British Govt. should have been emphasized in this way. If he had been released there might have been a reaction in favour of the Govt. which would have largely covered their sins.

What will happen now I do not know— But something has taken place which cannot be forgotten, and we cannot just go back to the position as it was before the fast.

x x x x

No letter yet or other news from Indu.

March 5, Friday

So the fast is over and Bapu has survived. We got the news through the Suptd. on the forenoon of March 3rd. Curiously enough no newspapers came yesterday and so it was only today that we read about it. After the tension of the past three weeks there is relief and a feeling of relaxation. And slowly we go back to our old routine.

x x x x

Tonight I have written a long letter to Indu and addressed it to Naini Prison (*via* the Govt. of Bombay). Two or three days ago it struck me that it was foolish for me to wait for her letter. Why not write myself?

I have also written to Betty.

March 5, 1943

Darling Indu,

What an age it is since I wrote to you or had a letter from you! Ever since you were a tiny tot and learnt laboriously to spell out your letters and write a fantastic hand, I do not think there has ever been such a lengthy period without my writing to you. Whether I was in prison or you were thousands of miles away, I continued to write from time

to time. Not so this time. Need I say how I have missed this? Two brief letters came from you in mid-September and they gladdened me. I wrote in reply. Long afterwards I learnt that my letters did not reach you as no letters were allowed to detenues in the U.P., nor were they allowed to write. So that was that and I adjusted myself accordingly.

More than two months ago I read in some newspaper that you were now allowed to write. I do not put much faith in newspaper items of this kind, still there was no reason why it should not be true and I looked forward to a letter from you. None came. Then Betty wrote to me that the U.P. Govt., or someone on their behalf, had informed her officially that you could write letters. That was definite enough. Yet no letter came. I cannot make out what the position is. Whatever it is, I shall of course accept it and adjust myself to it, as one must, but not to know worries me. I am writing now hardly a proper letter, but more to find out if this reaches you, and whether it is worthwhile my writing to you. It is not much good my doing so if my letters do not reach you.

I understand you are in Naini and I am addressing this letter there, though of course it will go through the Bombay Govt. and, for aught I know, through the U.P. Govt. also. So far as we are concerned, we may not say where we are—that is supposed to be a dead secret, though everybody seems to know about it! So when you write to me you should address your letters C/o The Secretary to the Government of Bombay, Home Department (Political), Bombay. That, I think, is the correct form, brackets and all.

Towards the end of November I received a message about you, through various provincial Govts. as usual. This was to the effect that you had been examined by the Civil Surgeon of Allahabad and that though your health was indifferent, there had been no marked deterioration since your arrest and detention. That was not a pleasing message and it did not cheer me up. Yet I knew that you would look after yourself, wherever you might be, and would adapt yourself to your new surroundings. So I had to be content with that. Naini Prison is not a health resort at any time of the year. The female part of it is peculiarly disagreeable and it is no easy matter to put up with it. As summer approaches I find it more and more difficult not to worry about your health.

We have been here now for nearly seven months. At the end of August we were informed that we could write to certain near relatives and receive letters from them. This list of possible relatives was small enough but, so far as I was concerned, it vanished away almost to

nothing, for I could not even write to you or Nan as both of you were not allowed to receive letters. The only person who remained was Betty and Betty has therefore been my window to the outside world during these months. I have written to her from time to time, not very frequently—usually once in three weeks or so. Occasionally I have written to Tara also though I was not quite sure whether a niece came in that list of approved relatives. However she seems to have got my letters. I have written to no one else. I am told that I can write two letters a week and receive four letters a week. As a matter of fact I have not even written two letters a month so far.

Early in November I was anxious to send you something for your birthday. This was not an easy matter. I tried to pick out half a dozen or more books from book-sellers' catalogues. I was informed later that only one or two of them were available and these had been sent to you — Did you receive them? I do not even remember now which ones they were.

As for books, I am thinking of sending you a fat packet of them soon. It will go of course through the Bombay Govt. and I hope it reaches you. Some of them are from Anand Bhawan, others are newly purchased or sent to me by Betty. It is not a very choice selection but you may find some of interest. Nan and Chand, who I believe are with you, may like some of them. If you people can send any on to Ranjit & Feroze, you might do so. When you finish with any of these books you can get them sent to Anand Bhawan. I suppose this is possible.

As for me, I am as usual fit and healthy. I am minus one more tooth which gave me trouble and which I had pulled out here. My waistline has improved by a suitable reduction in weight!

But I am anxious to have news of you and of Nan and Chand Also of Feroze and Ranjit, if you can give it. Tell me all about yourself. I have always believed that this jail-going, though troublesome enough and sometimes a difficult burden to carry, is good for one's education and mental development. Provided one can lead the proper life. This is your first experience and you have had six months of it. I do hope you have been able to adjust yourself to it and have tried to profit even from its tremendous inconveniences and utter boredom. We begin to see life in a new perspective and new values take the place of old ones.

For my part, I am a great believer in some manual occupation in prison and so I devoted a great deal of time to gardening. There has been no expert like Ranjit with us and so we have floundered aimlessly and made many foolish mistakes. But I have dug deep and played about with the soft earth and watched the little seedlings appear and

then blossom forth into a fantasy of colour. We have succeeded in converting a bare and uninviting stretch of ground into something which may be very poor from an expert gardener's point of view but is nevertheless a great relief and pleasure to us. And the amount of time and labour it has taken up! I wish you could interest yourself in gardening. I managed to get from Pocha's in Poona some dicky little garden tools.

How callous and beautiful is nature and how it carries on in its old way regardless of human woe and suffering! I have just been reading about the Greeks—I have read through all these extant tragedies and comedies—and I came across a pregnant passage. Athens had destroyed Melos utterly¹¹⁸—unoffending, innocent Melos—and not a man or woman or child was left there to tell the tale. But soon other people came to live in that island, and once more there was corn in her little valleys and men sat in her city market place drinking the sweet wine from her hillsides.

Where bled her children hangs the loaded sheaf.
Forgetful is green earth : the Gods alone
Remember everlastingly : they strike
Remorselessly, and ever like for like.
By their great memories the Gods are known.

But the gods seem to have had their day and have sunk into everlasting sleep, and man, as H.G. Wells tells us, has yet to develop into *Homo Sapiens*.¹¹⁹ He is brute still and his brutish qualities are only too evident. But while war goes on with all its horror and desolation and misery, nature carries on unheeding and unconcerned.

I have a habit of forgetting where I am, and forgetting even the course of events. Sometimes I would think of Mummie and want to tell her something. Sometimes you would seem to be quite near me.

Betty sent me an electric shaver, which was very welcome as blades are scarce. I rather liked this gadget and the thought came to me that I might get one for Feroze and one for Ranjit. Then I realised that this was not easy and I could hardly reach them. And anyway they would not have electric current where they were.

Soon you will have your wedding anniversary and the first year of your wedded life will be over—most of it spent in Naini Prison! Perhaps this experience has much good in it if we know how to extract

118. For not having paid tribute to Athens.

119. Humanity's chances of survival are discussed by Wells in his book *Outlook on Homo Sapiens*. He argues that within only a few centuries the human adventure will have ended in defeat.

it. Life is a curious business after all, and it seems to grow curiouser. To be thrown on oneself and out of the ordinary rut of life gives us a deeper understanding and makes our lives richer and more worthwhile. It is worthwhile, anyway, to break away occasionally from the amazing triviality and utter futility of what most people call life.

I would have written to you sooner but the last three weeks or more have been abnormal and all manner of possibilities have loomed ahead and cast their shadow on us. Now that Bapu's fast is successfully accomplished a weight is off my mind and I can write.

I have written a longer letter than I had intended. How could I help it when I am writing to you after seven months? My mind goes back to that early morning of August 9th when I parted from you and left you standing while the car carried me away to our unknown destination. And yet all of us are continually journeying to unknown destinations and few give thought to it!

Give my love to Nan and Chand. I hope both are well and keep good cheer. I hope Feroze and Ranjit are also well.

My love to you, my dear,

Your loving
Papu

If it is possible for you, try to get my two letters addressed to you in September last. They should be in Anand Bhawan.

5.3.43

Darling Betty,

I have received three letters from you since I wrote to you last. Also the message from Amma. In two of your letters six or seven lines were blackened out.

I have not written to you for some time as I felt in no mood to write while Bapu's fast was on. Now that this is successfully over and a weight has been removed from our minds, I can write more easily. Today I am writing also to Indu and sending the letters (through the Bombay Govt. of course) to Naini Prison. I understand she is there. I have not heard from her yet.

Will you please write to Amma and tell her that I would gladly write to her if I could. But I do not think she comes in the list of relatives to whom letters can be sent. So I am not writing.

There is really little to write about. After the nervous strain of the last three weeks there is a feeling of relief and relaxation. I go back to my books and other daily occupations and the old routine goes on. I am thinking of sending a number of books from here (the ones I no longer require) to Indu. If she does not want any she can send them on to Anand Bhawan. I have got far too many books with me now.

Do not be in a hurry to send any more books to me. They can come just as soon as you have leisure. I have plenty to carry on with.

There was one little book which I particularly wanted to have though it must be difficult to get it. This is Sylvain Levi's *Le Theatre Indien*. The only possibility is to find it in a public or semi-public library—like the Royal Asiatic Society's or some other like it.

It would be worthwhile your testing my Rolex wrist watch thoroughly before sending it. And the only way to test it is for someone to wear it. It has played me false many times.

Did I tell you that I had received the two khaki khadi pieces? They are just right.

I take it that Nan, Indu and Chand are all together in Naini. Also that Feroze and Ranjit are also in Naini. Probably Mohan Bhai is also there.

There was a rather vague item of news in some paper a little while ago to the effect that interviews were now permitted in Yeravda Prison. Is there any truth in this? Perhaps it applies to convicted prisoners and not to detenues.

It is warming up here and I imagine that in another two or three weeks it will be unpleasantly warm.

Love to you and the children.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

12 March 1943

Darling Indu,

Just a week ago tonight I wrote a letter to you and in this letter I promised to send you a number of books. This parcel of books has gone off today, at any rate, so far as I am concerned. It is going, in the first instance, to the Bombay Government, which is our one and only window for communication, and then, if the fates so will it, it will reach you—

I enclose a list of the books. It is an odd list and a very odd collection of books. They have not been selected for your especial benefit. They are just some of the books that have come my way here and which I no longer require. Some of them will not interest you at all. Others ought to. I intended sending a few more but at the last moment some of my companions developed a passion for reading them, and so they remained. Possibly I might send you another, and a smaller, packet later on after some weeks when I know that this lot has reached you.

Lin Yutang's new novel—*A Leaf in the Storm*¹²⁰—is good; though not quite so brilliant as the one that preceded it (*Moment in Peking*). *All Men Are Brothers* is an ancient Chinese novel which takes some reading—it is nearly 1200 pages! I waded through about 1000 pages and then began to droop. Still it is interesting in many ways and gives an insight into Chinese life and manners.

The complete collection of Greek plays is a treasure. Personally I like the so-called tragedies far better than the comedies. It is a pity that Gilbert Murray's translations are not always given. They are usually the best. Then there is Plato's *Republic*, a book for all time, if one can get into its spirit.

Science for the Citizen is, I am afraid, heavy reading often and sometimes the mathematics and formulae will be beyond you. Still it is an extraordinarily good book and very much worth reading and reading carefully. The best approach to it is to skip the difficult and technical passages and try to get the general hang of the progress and development of science, and even more so the spirit that lies behind science. It would be a good thing if you and Chand read it, or parts of it.

Homer Lea's *The Day of the Saxon*¹²¹ is an extraordinary book by a very extraordinary man—It is well worth reading. So also, for entirely different reasons, are Voltaire's *Charles XII*¹²² and Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography*.¹²³

120. It tells the story of China in war time. "Every leaf in the storm is an individual with a heart and feelings and aspirations and longings, and each is as important as others. Our task here is to trace what the war did to one woman, one leaf among the millions."

121. This is a tract warning of conflict between the East and the West by the American soldier and author, Homer Lea (1876-1912).

122. *History of Charles XII* deals with the Swedish King's wars, chiefly with Poland and Russia.

123. Written in the form of a letter to his son, it covers the life of Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790) up to 1752.

The four little volumes of *U.S.S.R. Speaks for Itself*¹²⁴ are fascinating.

I have added a small book of poems by Edward Thompson—his latest, which he sent me as a Christmas present. It reached me here. It pleased me to get it.

So much for the books I am sending you—I have done a fair amount of reading since I came here, and yet it has not been nearly as much as I expected it to be. Often the mood to read is absent and I look with some distaste on rows and rows of books—But the mood passes and I go back to them. Kripalani manages to get a goodly number of them, sent by Sucheta. These are usually of a lighter quality than mine.

Much of my time has been taken up by Urdu. I suppose I have made progress, yet it is extraordinarily slow work. For months past I have been reading a very fat tome about Akbar and his times. I had read previously a good deal about him, of course from English books. This new approach from an Urdu angle, full of details, has thrown a great deal of fresh light on him. What a fascinating man he was!

And so the days pass by, and it grows warmer, and I often wonder if I am growing any the wiser for all this miscellaneous reading and the musing that inevitably accompanies it. Wiser or not, there is no doubt that I grow older, as all of us do unfortunately. Some can afford to, others are less cheerful about it.

Is it well with you, my dear? This world is none too agreeable a place for the sensitive and the thin-skinned—And yet it is better that way than to be insensitive and thick-skinned. Inevitably we harden with the impact of life, we are fortunate if that hardening is on the surface only and not of the mind and heart. For if it probes deeper, it is not well with us. Life plays strange tricks and we must not allow it to overcome us in any way. It is friendly to those who meet its challenge with straight eyes and a stout heart, and out of the very experience that it burdens us with, arises a deeper knowledge and appreciation of its significance.

My love to you and Nan and Chand.

Your loving
Papu

124. They contain accounts of Russian achievement written by Soviet experts.

Enclosure: List of books &c.

List of books and old magazines

Sent by Jawaharlal Nehru to Indira Nehru Gandhi

-
- 1 *The Complete Greek Drama*—2 volumes
 - 2 Hogben: *Science for the Citizen*
 - 3 Lin Yutang: *With Love and Irony*
 - 4 Do : *A Leaf in the Storm*
 - 5 Upton Sinclair: *Between Two Worlds*
 - 6 Edward Dahlberg: *Do These Bones Live*
 - 7 Guenon: *East & West*
 - 8 G. Dahlberg: *Race, Reason & Rubbish*
 - 9 Bentwich: *Wanderer Between Two Worlds*
 - 10 Homer Lea: *The Day of the Saxon*
 - 11 Sohrab: *Broken Silence*
 - 12 Postgate: *Those Foreigners*
 - 13 Scanlon: *Very Foreign Affairs*
 - 14 *All Men Are Brothers*
 - 15 Bunyan: *The Pilgrim's Progress*
 - 16 Douglas Reed: *All Our Tomorrows*
 - 17 Aeschylus: *Lyrical Dramas*
 - 18 Virgil's *Aeneid*
 - 19 Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*
 - 20 Do: *The Journal to Stella*
 - 21 Voltaire: *History of Charles XII*
 - 22 *Autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini*
 - 23 Bjornson: *Three Comedies*
 - 24 Do : *Three Dramas*
 - 25 Neab: *The Fall of Constantinople*
 - 26 E. Thompson: *The New Recessional & Other Poems*
 - 27 *The U.S.S.R. Speaks for Itself*—4 volumes
 - 28 Moraes: *The Story of India*
 - 29 Epstein: *Let There Be Sculpture*
 - 30 C. Haldane: *Russian Newsreel*
 - 31 H.C. Wells: *You Can't be too Careful*
 - 32 W. Steed: *That Bad Man*
 - 33 Leach: *Reveille in Washington*
 - 34 Benjamin Franklin: *Autobiography*
 - 35 Holmes: *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table*
 - 36 Priestley: *Out of the People*
 - 37 Plato: *The Republic*

41 Volumes in all

Also:

- 13 copies of *Life*
- 6 copies of *Time*
- 3 copies of *Reader's Digest*

 22

J. Nehru
12-3-43

March 16—Tuesday

The mystery of Indu not writing to me has at last been cleared—at any rate to a large extent. In today's *Bombay Chronicle* appeared a letter which Betty has received from the U.P. Govt. An intriguing and interesting document which I had to read three times before I could fully understand its full significance. It appears that detenus in the U.P. are not allowed to write to anybody and this rule holds still. No change has been made in it. But the Govt. of India have pointed out to the U.P. Govt. that they have allowed the detenus under their direct control to write to their relatives on domestic matters—If such letters cannot be delivered to the detenus in the U.P. (who happen to be the near relatives of the G. of I. detenus), then the permission given by the Govt. of India has little meaning. Therefore the U.P. Govt. has permitted such U.P. detenus to receive letters from the G. of I. detenus who are their near relatives and to answer them. But the U.P. detenus cannot take the initiative in writing! What a rigmarole! Typical, I suppose, of the bureaucratic—military mind at work. It shows the nature of the beast.

Anyway the position is clearer now. I can write to Indu—and I presume to Nan & Chand also—and get their answers. I have already written to Indu on March 5th—On the 12th, a week later, I sent her another letter and a big parcel of books.

What an odd arrangement! Nan cannot write to Tara or Rita but she may write to me—or rather she can reply to a letter sent by me. If Indu wants to send a message, say to Anand Bhawan, she can only do so through me, in a letter in answer to mine. Then I write to Betty and she writes to Allahabad.

x

x

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Newspapers reported that Nan went out on parole on March 9th for a week for 'urgent domestic reasons', whatever these might be. I have been rather worried about this.

x

x

x

x

Reading reports of proceedings of the so-called 'Leaders Conferences'¹²⁵ &c and the various statements¹²⁶ made from time to time by Rajaji & others, my mind (and others' minds) has been making all manner of excursions. How far has Bapu approved of the steps that are being taken? There appears to be more than a hint in Rajaji's utterances that he has come to some understanding with him.¹²⁷ I do not like all this. There is trouble ahead—Plenty of trouble, I reckon.

21.3.43

Darling Betty,

At last I have found out about correspondence with Indu and Nan. It really is extraordinary that the U.P. Govt. should come to this decision and not inform me of it, for the whole thing depended on my knowing and acting accordingly. For over two months I wanted to get a letter from Indu. Anyway I have now written to her.

I wonder if you could do a service for the Maulana. He is very fond of White Jasmine (Chinese) Tea. He consumes it all by himself at about four o'clock in the early morning and at other odd times. He

125. On 10 March 1943, 35 leaders, including Sapru, Jayakar, Bhulabhai Desai and C. Rajagopalachari, issued a statement appealing to the Congress and the Government to reconsider their policies and come to a settlement. They hoped that if Mahatma Gandhi were released he would help "solve the internal deadlock."

126. In November 1942, Rajagopalachari sought permission to visit Mahatma Gandhi in detention; alternately he would like to visit England to try to overcome the "ill-will," which, he felt, the August Resolution had provoked. Getting no response, he issued a statement that a "settlement of the political deadlock was blocked" by the Government. On 14 March 1943, he declared: "The strong hand of the Government has suppressed the 'rebellion'... but repression adds to the damage to the belief in nonviolence. There is a forlorn hope still, namely, international arbitration."

127. Rajagopalachari met Mahatma Gandhi on 26 February and stated on 3 March 1943 that "... while I see some light and have caught some hope from Mahatma Gandhi's bedside ... I must meet friends and think out some plan."

has run short of it and cannot get it here. If it is obtainable in Bombay please send me a packet. I suppose it is not easy to get such articles now. If White Jasmine Tea is not available some near approach to it might be sent. I believe it is fairly expensive.

I am glad Raja's eyes are better and that the boys are well.

Love,

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

March 22. Monday Holi

Two days ago I received a letter from Betty in which she quoted from a letter she had just got from Nan from Allahabad (she is out on parole for two or three weeks). This explained the present position about my correspondence with Indu & Nan in Naini Prison. I may write to them and they may send answers to my letters.

Yesterday I wrote to Nan—also to Betty. This was my first letter to Nan since our arrest.¹²⁸

I am worried about the 'grave domestic matters' which has brought out Nan on parole. She would not have come out unless she was thoroughly upset over something.

Today is *Holi*—mother's birthday! Nothing doing here—I remember last year's *Holi* in Anand Bhawan—the year before's in Dehra Dun—and so many others.

March 26. 1943

Indu Darling,

This is the third letter I am writing to you this month. The two previous ones were dated 5th and 12th March. I mention this so that you and I might know if my letters are reaching you. Previously I had written to you on September 18th (the first letter I wrote from this place) and on October 15th, but both these did not reach you—

Some light has been thrown on the mystery of our correspondence—indirectly of course—but I am still by no means sure what the fate of my letters is. Something about it appeared in a newspaper and last

128. Jawaharlal wrote 48 letters to Vijayalakshmi Pandit during this term of imprisonment. Copies of them are not available in J.N. Papers in N.M.M.L.

week I received a letter from Betty in which she quoted a few lines from a message she had from Nan. Nan explained that while I could write to you and to her, neither of you could take the initiative in the matter. But you could answer my letters! This is all very complicated and my poor mind took some time to grasp the situation. However, I have written to you already and so have done my job.

It is an odd arrangement, but everything is pretty odd nowadays. What amazes me is the fact that the U.P. Government, or whoever is responsible for this business, should have taken no steps whatever to inform me of it for unless I knew and took action, no one else could take the initiative. It was not much good your knowing for you could not write to me unless I wrote to you previously. Even now I have had no formal or official intimation and if Nan had not succeeded in sending me a message through Betty, I would have remained in the dark. I cannot rely on newspaper reports as they have misled me in the past and led me to believe during these last three months that you could and were going to write to me.

Even now I am by no means certain. This assurance will only come to me when I get a letter from you. Betty tells me that Nan wrote to me nearly three weeks ago—soon after coming out for her brief period. This letter of hers has not reached me so far.

So now if you want to send a message to our house in Allahabad or elsewhere, the way is simple and clear. I write to you so that you can send an answer; then you write to me and your letter passes through various governments and censors and possibly reaches me ultimately. Then I convey your message to Betty, and lastly Betty writes to Allahabad! With luck all this may be done well within two months. We must learn from these swift and efficient ways of doing business.

Anyway if there are any books or anything else which you require and have no other means of getting, you can adopt this course and let me know. I shall try to set this intricate machinery in action. Possibly Chand may require some particular books. It is not very easy to get the books one wants. Few new books seem to come and of the old books, the Bombay booksellers seem to avoid the decent ones—possibly there is little market for them.

I might mention that I sent you a case full of odd books on March 12th.

Normally I shall keep writing to you once a week. Occasionally I might write to Nan or Chand. In any case someone of you three ought to get a letter from me every week. If it is not forthcoming or is delayed, the fault lies elsewhere. Last week I did not write to you but wrote to Nan instead at Anand Bhawan.

Having said so much about the procedure of writing, I suppose I had better come to the substance of the letter. And yet there is not much substance in a letter from one prison to another, unless one takes to analysing and recording states of mind—an alarming undertaking! There is little else that happens within prison walls, short of physical illness. Many succumb to this illness, but that change & variety does not come my way and I have no intention of allowing it to do so.

In a sense I have had a novel experience this time. Previously I was kept alone or with one companion. Now we are a round dozen and many of them very interesting companions. The brightest of companions is apt to pall on one in the inescapable intimacy of prison. Still this is a definite advantage. Sometimes, especially in the evenings, some of us emerge out of our shells and talk on all manner of subjects: the development of the war situation, international affairs, national happenings, politics, religion, science, philosophy, ethics, art, economics, linguistics, literature, cooking, gardening, India old & new, China, Europe, America, the ancient civilizations, the future & so on and so forth—anything to take us out of ourselves and give us the feeling of activity—mental if not physical.

You may be surprised to learn how many languages are represented in our group, nearly all of them in a scholarly way. Of classical languages: Sanskrit, Pali, Arabic and Persian. Of modern Indian languages: Hindi and Urdu, Gujarati & Marathi, Bengali & Oriya, Tamil and Telugu, and Sindhi—also a little Punjabi. Then of course English, and a smattering of French and German. A formidable list, yet we are no dwellers in babel. In a sense, it is an ideal opportunity to learn some of these languages and some of us are pegging away at them. But life is too short for this business, especially at our respective ages. For my part Urdu is all I have taken up so far. But I nourish a secret hankering to read *Shakuntala* in the original Sanskrit with Narendra Deva, and to learn a little modern Persian from the Maulana, an ideal teacher, except that he is too erudite. Meanwhile, the Maulana, out of the vast stores accumulated in his mind, throws out a few Urdu verses at me every few days, and sometimes even an Arabic or Persian couplet, which I transcribe painfully. Thus I have collected some hundreds. But I have a feeble memory.

And I read of course—a miscellaneous assortment of books, old & new. Just at present one of the books I am entangled in is Lewis Carroll's collected works. They bring back memories of my childhood to me and I love reading his stories & verses. I have a fine edition—Nonesuch Press. It had a lovely cover but that, alas, is no more. Poor Alice had a new adventure when she travelled to this unknown part of

the world. She came with a mixed retinue of books, clothes, cigarettes and oddments—including bottles of delicious honey which Psyche sometimes sends. The honey was really quite separate but some wise person in the Bombay Secretariat forced the honey bottles into the suitcase. And when the case was opened I saw a ghastly sight—the very horror of it fascinated me. There was honey, honey everywhere, flowing, sticking, oozing out all over the place. Alice was swimming in it. Well, having survived the first shock, we began our work of salvage. But Alice bears traces of it to this day, and the cover is no more, and in spite of all the wiping and drying & sunning, ants smell their way to her. I think I shall send this book to you in my next lot next month. That is if the first lot has reached you—

You will be sorry to learn that Yunus is very ill and has grown even thinner than he was. It is T.B. So Betty writes. He is at present in detention in Abbottabad. I am very worried about him. He is one of the most likeable persons I have come across.

I understand from a message sent by Amma (through Betty) that Kailas and Sheila are flourishing in London—

It is warming up here. So it must be in Naini.

Keep well and cheerful, my dear—My love to you.

Your loving
Papu

March 27. Saturday

Last night I wrote letters to Indu & Chand—both in Naini Prison. I had hoped to get Nan's letter before I wrote again. Instead of waiting for it I decided to write on the day I have fixed—Friday. This means I write on Friday & give my letters to the Superintendent on Saturday morning. Presumably it reaches the Bombay Govt. on Monday.

Soon after I had despatched my letters, Nan's letter came. It was very welcome. Parts of it disturbed me but on the whole I felt very much better for it. The reason for her coming out on parole was not mentioned, though I can vaguely guess it. Anyway her being out has, I hope, fixed things up and done her also some good. Tara & Rita are going to Kashmir after their examinations early in April and later will shift to Bombay where Tara will join college. They will go to Kashmir with the Pratap Pandits.¹²⁹

¹²⁹ Pratap, elder brother of Ranjit Pandit.

Indu, it appears, was quite ill when she was arrested and for six weeks afterwards. She ran a temperature of 100-101°F. But with the coming of the cold weather she improved and has been more or less well since. But now? The hot weather is almost upon us again.

I was glad to find from Nan's letter that the Chinese governess has been a success—also that many of our Chinese contacts continue and are being added to when opportunity offers.

x x x x

Today has been a special day. There was Nan's letter. Also Kripalani produced a gramophone! Sucheta had sent this with a fair selection of records. So we had music in the evening.

x x x x

Tomorrow is the anniversary of Indu's marriage!

March 30. Tuesday

Yesterday I had a letter from Betty. She is going to Allahabad, or rather must have gone two days ago, to see Nan and fetch the children to Bombay. I was glad of this.

It is curious how 'a letter—and much more so in prison—affects one's mind. It depresses or cheers, or sometimes there is a curious mixture of the two feelings. But always one of them predominates. The reason for this is sometimes obvious enough. But often enough it is not so, especially in cases of depression. I have felt put out and moody after reading a letter, and long afterwards because of it, not remembering easily the reason for it. Some petty item of news, some chance phrase or hint, has affected my mood, and that mood has remained without memory of the cause.

Betty's letter pleased me. Later, on thinking about it, I realised that this was largely due to her account of a visit she had had from the Chinese educational mission. One member of this mission brought gifts from Dr Tai Chi-tao. There was a little painting for Bapu, a jade Buddha for Betty, a jade urn for Nan, and a beautifully written poem (presumably written by Dr. Tai himself). This poem was by a prime

minister¹³⁰ of the Sung Dynasty who was imprisoned by the Mongols in Chengiz Khan's time. It was written in prison and is said to be a very fine poem. This poem was Dr. Tai's gift to me! An appropriate one under the circumstances.

The thought that Dr Tai should take the trouble to send these gifts now led me to realise how very friendly his feelings towards us must be. There was not only the personal side—and that was pleasing enough, but also the larger national issue—the feeling of China for India. Somehow, in spite of everything, China has grown more and more friendly to India. There is a deep understanding, even though they may not like or appreciate all we have done. I am sure that the Generalissimo & Madame Chiang have done their utmost for our cause, even at the risk of offending the British Govt. The irritation of the British Govt. is petty & obvious and there is a studious ignoring of China in their statements—Churchill's speech a few days ago was a striking example of this.

What is there that draws China to India and India to China? Something in our subconscious racial selves? Some forgotten memories of thousands of years ago? Or just common misfortune?

Whatever it may be, it almost seems as if it was the working of some unseen fate. Wishful thinking!

Anyway I feel very grateful to the Chiangs especially and to the Chinese people generally.

So Betty's letter cheered me up.

X

X

X

X

It was as well that it did so for the news of Satyamurti's death¹³¹ had inevitably depressed us. The passing of an old colleague is always a painful affair. More so in prison when one feels so helpless. We have tried to send a message to his wife¹³² through Govt. Doubtful if it will reach her.

130. Wen Tien-hsaing, the prime minister, wrote this poem, inspired by the "righteous spirit", to show his countrymen that he never betrayed his motherland. He says that this "righteous spirit" gives birth to the sun and the stars, the mountains and the rivers, and the heroic qualities of men and the judiciousness of the government. He sees the same spirit in the lives of historical figures who suffered for their country or for a righteous cause.

131. S. Satyamurti, who was arrested at the outbreak of the August movement, fell ill in January 1943, and the Government was prepared to release him if he gave securities for good behaviour. He refused and remained in detention. On 2 February he was released on medical grounds and died on 28 March.

132. Balasundar Ammal.

x

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x

Someone said this evening: 'Death is the birthright of every person born'—an obvious platitude. And yet it stuck in my memory and seemed an apt way of putting it. It is much more than a birthright. Yet it is something that is or should be, if we do not lack courage, within our power to achieve. If we cannot master life, we can at least master death. It is a pleasing thought and it lessens the feeling of helplessness.

Not that I think at all of death, that is of my death. At the back of my mind I have some kind of a conviction that I shall live for many years. Vaguely I imagine that I shall live to 70 at least and may be 75—There is no particular reason for fixing this age, except that both father and mother were just 70 when they died. I am healthier than either and so I might exceed that limit,—provided—there are so many provisos!

Also there is a feeling that I shall yet do something worthwhile. That gives an incentive to life—And so I am very far from thinking in terms of death. The passing of the years worries me for they mean a lessening of the possible period for constructive activity—if I ever get the chance for it!

Sometimes, rarely, death seems not so bad—This is not so much because of personal frustration—I am not conscious of that to any marked extent. But the world, and all the evil and badness & violence and wickedness and vulgarity and futility of it, oppresses me occasionally. Will it ever really improve? Every virtue seems inevitably to be accompanied by a vice. Nothing seems to be just good, just right, just appropriate, and wholly worthwhile.

x

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x

What a lot the Chiangs' friendship has meant to me!

April 2. Friday

Maulana has been very depressed for the last two days. He has had bad news of his wife's¹³³ health—'grave condition', how grave I do not know. He is so quiet and silent about his private & domestic affairs. Possibly also recent debates in the House of Commons¹³⁴ and in the Assembly at Delhi have added to the depression, as well as some other events in India. Not that there was anything new in the debates. But the unctuousness of it all, the high moral justification for every evil deed done by Govt, and a feeling of helplessness on our part—all this is exasperating. Further the way Indians in high places—in the Viceroy's Council &c—accept this position and allow themselves to become the pillars of British policy in India.

Nearly eight months we have been here—a daily strain on most of us. We get accustomed to it and carry on. We have accepted the inevitability of a long term of imprisonment, running into years, and I suppose we shall all survive it, though several amongst us are ill enough—Indeed the majority are ailing: Vallabhbai, Pattabhi, Narendra Deva, Govind Ballabh, Asaf, Mahmud, Kripalani. From the health point of view my record is best. Next Mahtab & Profulla Ghose.

Many elsewhere, in prison or detention camp, may not survive this ordeal. And many others, boys & girls, young men & young women, will suffer much more than we do, who are more accustomed to it.

During all this period how splendidly Maulana has behaved, like the perfect and very gallant gentleman he is—and that is more than can be said about myself. He has never complained, never found fault with others and always tried to cheer up people. Having taken a step deliberately, he is fully prepared to accept all the consequences that flow from it, without murmur or complaint, even though that step was, in some ways, against his own judgment. Later happenings have justified

133. Zuleikha Begum.

134. During the debate on 30 March 1943, the Secretary of State for India said that as "no change of heart in Mr. Gandhi can be traced in his recent correspondence with the Viceroy" the British attitude to any move to end the deadlock would be "nothing doing." The Deputy Prime Minister, Clement Attlee, who followed him, said: "The Indian political parties had taken a wrong road towards a totalitarian outlook; they should return to the more liberal tradition of the earlier Congress movement."

him.¹³⁵ Every criticism he made, during our long deliberations from May to August last, is now seen to have been correct. Yet he never points this out or even refers to it.

Sometimes I have felt irritated at some of his habits and ways. He is punctilious about many trivial matters—extreme punctuality about meals &c. He lives in a disciplined rut. He has a way of holding forth like a preacher—sermonizing—not about the big things but about many of the minor things. (The big things he avoids as being too serious for light conversation.) His voice is often very loud. Enforced intimacy for a long period leads to strain & irritation. All of us suffer from this and react to it according to our different natures. Also all of us try our utmost to control ourselves and not to misbehave in any way or say or do anything which might hurt a colleague.

How different our habits are, and we are too old to change them much now except in so far as we must.

x x x x

Generally speaking, I have probably been the worst offender, though even I have usually behaved well or at least not too badly. My outbursts of temper have been against Mahmud—poor Mahmud, who tries his best to please me. His religiosity & general tendency to 'magic', if I may say so, upsets me.

x x x x

Maulana, in many ways, has been under the heaviest strain. He is not a good mixer. He keeps apart and so inevitably cannot get rid easily of the burden by shouting and activity. Yet he has borne this burden with dignity and strength, and perfect courtesy all round.

x x x x

In a sense, probably, some others, like Vallabhbhai, Kripalani & Shanker Rao, have been harder hit and are suffering more. For recent happenings have not justified Bapu's policy to which they had so stoutly

135. When Mahatma Gandhi spoke of a struggle at the Congress Working Committee meeting in July 1942 he felt that the Government would not take drastic action but would seek a settlement in view of the Japanese threat. Vallabhbhai Patel and J.B. Kripalani urged complete acceptance of his plan. Only Maulana Azad and Jawaharlal saw the international implications and urged that the Congress should not do anything that might help the Japanese. Maulana Azad warned Mahatma Gandhi that the authorities would not allow him to remain at large and direct a movement against themselves.

adhered. They have rather shown up the correctness of what Maulana & I and some others contended for.

x

x

x

x

Bapu's repeated references to possible anarchy¹³⁶—how strenuously Maulana argued against this. His want of clarity on the issue of war and our position in it—again how vigorously we pressed it, and indeed won our point for the A.I.C.C. resolution in Bombay accepted our view-point in its entirety. But it was too late and was overshadowed by C.D. &c, as well as by the series of Bapu's articles in *Harijan* from April to July. His draft resolution for the A.I.C.C. in Allahabad which Maulana & I opposed tooth & nail. That resolution was changed¹³⁷ no doubt but the fact of it, subsequently published, washed away the effect of our efforts. Bapu's insensitiveness to America & even to China (the latter partly overcome later) could not be got over or forgotten, even by subsequent statements. I think it is true that Bapu in this as in many other things reflected the mind of the great majority of people of India. But he ignored too much the wider international aspects. All my efforts for the last ten years or more disappeared almost into thin air—not quite though, especially in regard to China. Nationalism was dominant and internationalism receded.

Inevitable perhaps, all this, if we remember our background in India. There was and is no way out except through conflict between Indian nationalism & British imperialism. But still the question remained of the nature & methods and timing of this conflict. Obviously, to my thinking, we erred in some of these matters. Yet even that error was perhaps inevitable. As it was even we fell, for the moment, between two evils. We could not control the vast anti-British sentiment that existed and had grown, nor could we direct it into disciplined channels. We could not prevent some highly objectionable method of violence, and at the same time we did not & could not encourage violence as a whole. As

136. For example, in an interview to the *Daily Chronicle* on 14 May 1942, he said: "Under my proposal, the British have to leave India in God's hands—but in modern parlance to anarchy, and this anarchy may lead to internecine warfare for a time or to unrestrained dacoities. From these, a true India will rise in the place of the false one we see."

137. The Allahabad resolution indicated that the Congress favoured not only the political withdrawal of the British, but the withdrawal of British and American troops and the opening of talks by a government of free India with Japan. The Wardha resolution of 11 July 1942 assured that if India were declared free and a provisional government set up, that government would throw all its resources into the Allied war effort. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 12, pp. 276–285.

Maulana has said here if there was to be violence, we ought to have taken to it in a more disciplined and organised way. What was the good of these petty & irritating outbursts of violence?

On the other hand, much as I disliked what happened, I had the feeling, and so no doubt had others, that to submit to aggression & governmental violence & repression without striking back, was spiritual death. Anything better than that.

x

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x

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Nonviolence & violence! How we have got entangled into them. It hardly seems possible that we shall ever go back now to our ways & methods of the past 23 years, even if we want to. The war itself breeds the mentality of violence. How can we ask people to defend the country against a foreign aggressor with all methods of violence and, at the same time, ask them to be nonviolent in their struggle for national freedom? That was the conflict in the subconscious mind of India.

x

x

x

x

What of Bapu? More than ever before the responsibility has been his. He knows it, he feels it, and he must suffer for it. Even his letters to the Viceroy before his fast showed a toning down, an appreciable change in outlook. Compelled by the feeling of personal responsibility he undertook his 21-day fast. That is over and he has survived. At the same time, it is obvious that he has discharged almost his last weapon. This had big results so far as the people of India were concerned, but not just big enough. None so far as the Govt. was concerned, or those Indians closely associated with the higher ranks.

x

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What next? Possibly nothing much for a while—for some months. Undoubtedly the situation will develop outside, but the process will be slow and will probably not go far. The Govt.'s attitude has certainly stiffened various non-Congress sections. They will shout more & become more bitter. The Muslim League will gradually realise that the Congress is out of the way and yet nothing much is happening in its favour. It will become more anti-British, anti-Government. But that too will only result in stronger resolutions and no more. Beyond that Jinnah cannot go, constituted as he is.

x

x

x

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What then? The war will go on, almost interminably. The end is far. Slowly as the pressure of events, economics etc., is felt, other forces will rise; new situations will be created. But that is a long story.

x

x

x

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What of Bapu? Can he remain silent for long? I doubt it. Yet what can he do? The only possible weapon in his hands now is fasting and that too is rather blunted. He cannot repeat the old fast for a period, however long. If he fasts, he will fast to death, regardless of developments or possibly subject to some contingency which is unlikely to happen.

x

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x

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I have a feeling that I shall not see him again. I do not think he will survive this imprisonment.

x

x

x

x

Fate—destiny—Am I growing into a fatalist?

x

x

x

x

Well! Well! all these are vague nothings. The solid fact is that we are here in Ahmadnagar Fort; that we are not going to bow down and humble ourselves before the British Govt.; that we are going to remain here for a considerable time; and that we should make the best of the job. It is best not to expect too much from life.

April 2 Friday night

Odd how moods change. I have not been feeling overcheerful lately. And yet, for no apparent reason, I felt quite light-hearted this evening and Kripalani caught me quietly smiling to myself. I was thinking of past happenings and persons far away, and, for the moment, I forgot where I was. Perhaps this train of thought began in the afternoon as I was writing my weekly letter to Indu.

April 2, 1943

Indu Darling,

This is letter No. 4, new series. No. 1 was sent on March 5th, that is nearly a month ago. An answer to this is due. I await it daily.

The day after I wrote to you last week I received Nan's letter from Anand Bhawan. Tell her of this and also that I shall write to her next week. I presume she will be with you again by the time you receive this letter. This week I am writing to Betty, apart from this letter to you. I have fixed upon Friday evenings for writing and I propose to write two letters every week, one of these being to you—On Saturday morning I hand these letters to the emblem of authority here and I understand that they are sent off, under registered cover, the same day. Presumably they are delivered at the Bombay Secretariat on Monday. After that what happens to them and how long they take in reaching you I do not know. They should not take more than ten days at most from the time of my writing.

Nan's letter gave some news of your health—how you were unwell for about six weeks after your arrest and had a rise in temperature but that later you recovered. I understand now why it was necessary for the Civil Surgeon of Allahabad to examine you in Naini. His message, sent to me through Government, bears a special meaning now—It said that your health was indifferent on the whole but that there had been no marked deterioration since her arrest and detention. Considering that when arrested you were running a temperature and were unwell, this was not saying much. However, I am glad you kept well during the winter. The test will be during the next three months. This will be your first full summer in the plains since—when? I really do not remember but it was years and years ago, somewhere in the middle twenties, I imagine, when you were about three feet or less in height. It will be a change after the Swiss winters and Kashmir last year.

Personally I think this fear of the heat is, partly at least, psychological. One can largely ignore it if one sets about it the right way. It is not possible wholly to forget it or not to be affected by it. Still I hope you will face the heat intelligently and feel a little friendly to it, as I have more or less succeeded in doing.

We are getting on here—It is over 100°F in the shade and the mid-day hot wind reminds us a little of the *loo*.

Nan asked me if I had received some clothes sent to me from Allahabad. Yes I got them and informed Betty of the fact. When I came here I was singularly ill-provided with clothes. I suppose most of my

things were at the dhobi's in Bombay, and hurriedly you pushed in what you could find. I decided to have additional *kurtas* & pyjamas made, also shorts, shirts &c. &c. More clothes came from Bombay (the dhobi's lot) and from Allahabad. Still I thought it best to have a fair supply. It was no easy matter to get khadi, and good khadi anyhow was unobtainable. Then the method of having any clothes made without seeing or knowing the tailor and without any trying-on is not to be recommended. But there was no other way. The result is that I have got a supply of clothes made on a more spacious & generous scale than was necessary and I look a little small in them. Partly this is due to the fact that I am somewhat thinner. Anyway, I am well provided for and have enough clothes to last me for another two years—winter and summer.

What has happened to your little house in Tagore Town? I hope you have given it up and are not holding on to it. That was hardly worthwhile. And where is your furniture and your marvellous radio? Safe and properly looked after I hope.

That reminds me that we have now got a gramophone here! Of course Sucheta is responsible for sending it to Kripalani. It came a few days ago with a fair selection of records—nothing very highbrow. Then a dozen records of European music and 2 dozen Indian ones. I wished there might have been some Beethoven records. And then I thought how good it would be if you could have your gramophone & Beethoven.

Nan writes that Feroze tried to send me a letter but did not succeed. Why this failure I do not know for the ways of the U.P. Govt. are peculiar. Feroze, on his side, is allowed to write and I am told that a son-in-law is on the favoured list of those I can correspond with. What is Feroze's sentence?

I learn from Betty that Yunus is better now and rejoicing in the coming of spring in Abbottabad or at least he was when he wrote to her.

Buddhi, so Nan wrote, has become expert at making Chinese dishes under the guidance of Mrs. Chand.¹³⁸ This is tantalizing, but I shall hold my soul in patience. Do you know those lines, to be sung or recited with slow solemnity, after the well-known air, and with a proper mixture of pathos and romance? I do not remember them myself very well but here is an attempt to reproduce some of them:

138. Wife of C.B. Kaul, a brother of Kamala Nehru.

There is a boarding house, far far away,
Where they give ham and eggs,
Three times a day.
Oh! how the boarders yell
When they hear the dinner bell
Three times a day!

And so on. Of course we do not have ham and eggs here—we have the local substitutes—and, need I say?, we do not yell. We are much too polite and restrained.

The subject of food reminds me that you should have plenty of fruit. Whether you get it or not I do not know. Allahabad is poor in fruit at this time of the year. So I am asking Betty to arrange with a fruitier in Bombay to send you a weekly parcel to Naini C.P.

Who are your companions? I have just seen in the papers that Chand has been released—I sent her a letter last week to Naini. This will miss her now—I hope you are not alone now, for Nan also will not be back for another 3 days. Is Nora with you?

I was glad to learn that you can have a fortnightly interview with Feroze—

I am collecting more books to send you—
All my love to you, darling,

Your loving
Papu

2.4.43

Darling Betty,

According to your letter you must be in Allahabad now. But by the time this reaches Bombay you will be back home.

Your account of the visit of the Chinese Education Mission to you was interesting. Dr. Tai is a dear and for some reason or other, ever since I visited him at Chengtu, he has got a soft corner in his heart for me. When he spent a few days in Anand Bhawan, the bronze Buddha in my room impressed him greatly and I went up immediately in his estimation. He is convinced, for no obvious reason that I am aware

of, of my high spiritual qualities.¹³⁹ I hope you gave my thanks suitably for the poem by the prime minister of the Sung Dynasty who flourished in Chengiz Khan's time.

There is a book just out which promises to be interesting. It is *Sculpture Inspired by Kalidasa*¹⁴⁰ by C. Siwaramamurti (Sanskrit Academy, Mylapore, Madras—Rs. 2/-). I should like to have it if possible.

Mahmud sends you his love and the others, according to their varying degrees of intimacy with you or their standards of right behaviour and propriety, send love, remembrances, blessings, *namaskars*, etc.

My love to you my dear.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

April 5. Monday Naoroz 2000 Samvat

A new year—a new century—a new millennium begins today according to the *Samvat* era. Inevitably the mind thinks of it as a vital day as if these man-made conventions make the slightest difference to events. Yet it is curious how rooted is the conviction in the minds of many that this year has a peculiar significance.

The *Naoroz* brought a letter from Nan to me, written from Anand Bhawan and this gave me the first real news of Indu, Chand, Nan and others in Naini Prison during the last eight months. Indu's cheerfulness and vitality delighted me and I felt light-hearted myself because of it. There was one thing, however, which distressed me—Nan's ill health. Clyde¹⁴¹ appears to think that her condition is bad and even an operation might be necessary. Normally she ought to have gone back to prison today on the expiry of her period for parole. But there appears to be a possibility of this being extended on medical grounds.

139. When he visited India in 1940 he could not meet Jawaharlal as he was in jail. He expressed his disappointment in verse :

Afar have I come seeking thee in vain,
Remembering thee in a lonesome strain.
Blest is he who shall suffer for mankind,
As with a Buddha's heart and hero's mind.

140. This book draws attention to the close ideological parallelism between a number of old sculptures found in different parts of India and outside, and some of the verses of Kalidasa.

141. Lt. Col. David Clyde, then Civil Surgeon, Lucknow, and later Deputy Inspector General of Civil Hospitals, U.P.

Indu must be rather lonely without Chand and Nan, although she has Nora with her.

Nan's reactions on her coming out for a while are interesting—after eight months she found much that was changed—There was an air of unfamiliarity about things. Our world will never be the same again. Always after a period in prison there is this feeling. But this time there is something much more behind it. So far as the Congress is concerned there is an end to being in or out of jail, although individuals may function so. The Congress can now either be an outlaw organisation, and therefore in prison, or in power in a free India—The long period of living on the verge of revolutionary activity and illegality, when sometimes we were legal and sometimes not, sometimes functioning as a constitutional party and sometimes as frankly a revolutionary party, is over. This hovering over the brink for such a lengthy period was only possible because of nonviolence & its concomitant. All this over. We either win or lose and go under. No middle way. It does not matter how this war progresses in the near or distant future. The alternatives to us are the same.

So the *Naoroz* brings only a message of strife and strength day by day, year after year, so long as life and strength last, unless a miracle ends that strife sooner.

The recent debates¹⁴² in Parliament and the Viceroy's offensive reply¹⁴³ to the deputation that proposed to see him has made this deadly clear.

April 7—Wednesday

National Week! How blank it is here in prison and how blank and empty it must be outside! Only memories. There is hardly a mention of it amongst us and we carry on in our usual way. A certain

142. In April 1943, during a Commons debate Amery ruled out negotiations with Congress because it was "difficult, indeed dangerous, to consider concessions for Mr. Gandhi, in the absence of the most explicit assurance and effective guarantee of a complete change of attitude." Attlee said in the same debate: "Personally I am a democrat, I object to the dictatorship of a reputed saint as much as the dictatorship of a notorious sinner."

143. The Viceroy had originally agreed to receive a deputation of Rajagopalachari and other Indian leaders on the understanding that he should receive an advance copy of their memorandum to which he would reply in writing. The deputation indicated their wish for supplementary discussion and the Viceroy refused.

dullness has enveloped us though outwardly there is no great change. Domestic happenings are partly the cause for this. Maulana's wife is seriously ill and so is Mahmud's wife. Curiously enough Mahmud has been keeping well and is relatively cheerful though worried about his wife. Kripalani is suffering from acute insomnia—Asaf continues to be in a limp condition, lacking all interest in any activity and generally unwell.

Maulana has grown definitely thin. His face shows it. After all he has lost over 30 pounds in weight since he came here. Many of us have lost weight. I have dropped about 11 pounds, but I keep well.

Nan's last letter mentioned how things had changed outside during these past eight months. Everything seemed to be unfamiliar and she found it difficult to fit in. Yesterday's papers stated that her parole had been extended by 15 days on account of ill-health.

The eight months I was out, Dec. 1941 to August 1942, were full of activity, new experiences, new sensations. I seemed to grow—and then a sudden and full stop.

My mind went back to my previous experiences in prison—how I felt then—the initial exhilaration and then the gradual oozing out of hope and vitality and settling down to a lower level of life.

In the early days of my first experience of prison, in December 1921 and January 1922, how full of exuberant gaiety we were. Then Chauri Chaura and a shock. Anger and irritation and adjustment to new conditions.

I came out in March '22 and went back again soon after. Neither any particular excitement nor depression. But slowly a feeling grew that there were going to be no quick results. It was a long affair full of heart-break and disappointment and, for some of us at least, a life chiefly spent in prison.

Out again at the end of January 1923 and disgust at our internal squabbles. Hard work of various kinds—the odd and distressing episode of my Nabha imprisonment. How father suffered because of this, and how I added to his suffering by my inconsiderate behaviour to him when he came to visit me in Nabha Prison.

Then a longish period of activity, mostly humdrum followed by twenty months in Europe with Kamala. Back again into the whirlpool—the Simon Commission beating—tension with father.....

1930—The high enthusiasm. The early weeks in prison full of a strange excitement at the news from outside. I do not think I have ever felt quite so exhilarated in prison as I did then.

Father's death—R.T.C.—Prison again—a long and steady period—much writing work.

Out for a few months—how precious they were—my last days with Kamala under more or less normal conditions. If only I had known that those were the last days of our companionship.

Alipore Jail—Horrid, depressing, lonely, not even writing permitted. And then the news from outside. Bapu's astounding statements & activities. How desolate and abandoned I felt! I do not think I have ever felt so unhappy and forlorn for political reasons as I did then, and yet much has happened since then of greater consequence and more far-reaching results.

Kamala's death—Congress presidentship—Congress Governments—N.P.C. &c., &c.

I go back to prison in October 1940 in individual C.D. It was a dull affair without excitement but I had an inner satisfaction that it was the right thing. So I had inward peace. The road was long and dreary and many of us were footsore, but we were on the march in the right direction.

The hectic period outside—Visit of the Chiangs—Stafford Cripps and so many others—new and interesting people. Bapu's sudden passion, which though partly understandable was yet obscure. Our long arguments with him which had undoubted effect. But the main drift continued and entangled us more and more. Undoubtedly Bapu represented the inmost feelings of most Indians then. Nationalism, intense and narrow, overshadowed the international scene—and ultimately led to August 9th and our arrest.

What of it now? Outwardly there seems to be a complete lull outside and the British Govt. is topdog—very much so. For the moment Indian nationalism has fired its last shot and has no organized energy left. No doubt this will come again—Meanwhile, there is a sense of helplessness & impotent anger all over India. But what is the good of this? The Viceroy has frankly stated that he will pay the price of bitterness among the Indian people if that is necessary.¹⁴⁴

Justice and such like vague things apart, it was and is a trial of strength between Indian Nationalism & British Imperialism and in this trial, for the present at least, the latter has triumphed. And in doing so it has put on, in its usual way, its sanctimonious garb of morality and the high cause of the United Nations &c.

144. The Viceroy's reply of 1 April 1943 to the request of some Indian politicians to meet Mahatma Gandhi stated *inter alia* "... while the Congress attitude remains unchanged, Government's first duty is to the people of India. It is not to be deflected from that duty by the suggestion... that it will add to bitterness and ill-feeling ... that is the price that the Government must pay for discharging its responsibilities."

We have hardly ever been quite so weak as we now appear to be. And yet I cannot quite believe this. Perhaps that is just wishful thinking.

Perhaps it is the war that makes a difference. In my bones I feel that this war must have a revolutionary end. It is revolution in its widest sense, and I cannot conceive the pre-war *status quo* to continue afterwards with only minor changes.

But for this war I would probably have felt more depressed.

Yet it is strange that in spite of everything I have never felt this time as I did in Alipore—there has not been that feeling of desolation and utter misery. I regret much that has been done and that has happened. Much of this took place against my wishes. That is no consolation.

Maulana's attitude is one of stoic acceptance of the results and consequences of action. By these consequences he is still more justified in what he urged previously. But he does not mention this. The only course open is to bear oneself with pride and dignity.

I have an advantage over Maulana inasmuch as the war means something more revolutionary and far-reaching to me. I must say my admiration for the Maulana has grown.

Probably Vallabhbhai, Kripalani, Profulla and Shanker Rao have been hardest hit. For they have been hit in their great faith in Bapu's instinct for right action at the right time. I do not know how they feel about it for we do not discuss this among ourselves—the subject is too delicate and our nerves might not be able to stand the strain. But it is obvious that they visualise an end of the so-called Gandhian era in Indian politics and this prospect leads to unhappiness, for the future is uncertain and dark.

Poor Asaf is the worst hit of all. Partly because of Aruna—

April 9. Friday

Eight months completed here today. It has been a bad day. In the afternoon came news of the death of Maulana's wife this morning in Calcutta. For the last five or six days there was a hint of impending tragedy and yet no one—and I do not think even Maulana—expected the sudden shock. Only yesterday morning he sent a telegram to his nephew (through the Bombay Govt. of course!) asking for daily reports by telegram. The only report that came after that was of her death. This came from the Bombay Govt.

There has been gloom here today and Maulana is hard hit. The shock of personal tragedy has shaken us all up and made us, or me at any rate, think of all manner of things. Maulana has behaved splendidly.

x

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x

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Yesterday I received a parcel from Betty—books, my wrist watch & timepiece, cigarettes & fruit crusher.

This morning I sent a small parcel of books to Indu.

This afternoon and evening I wrote letters to Indu and Nan—The letter to Nan was sent to Anand Bhawan.

April 9, 1943

Darling Indu,

This is letter No. 5. I am still looking forward to your letter which has taken an unconscionable time in coming. I am sure the fault is not yours. The tortuous methods which are applied to our correspondence, and possibly a lack of care, lead to amazing delays. It takes Mahmud quite a month sometimes to get a letter from his wife in Chapra. She is ill and he is naturally anxious but he has to put up with this.

I would have begun to doubt about my own letters reaching you. But some days ago I was informed officially (through a communication sent from the Bombay Secretariat) that my letters and a parcel of books had been forwarded to you. The first letter was apparently sent to the U.P. Government, the others direct to Naini Prison. So I suppose they reached you ultimately.

Fortunately I had another letter from Nan from Anand Bhawan and in this she gave me an account of your life in Naini. I was happy to read this and to find that you had adapted yourself to this new existence with energy and with humour. The odd names that you and Chand had given to almost everything within your reach were amusing and I laughed at several of them. It is surprising how much amusement we can extract from the dullest environment and from the most unpromising material, if only we know how to set about it. Evidently you know this art, and because of this you are favoured of the gods. Nothing is more foolish than to put on a long and tragic face at happenings we do not like—yet most of us do it, I am afraid, from time to time. The

world is too tragic for us also to be tragic—But there is another side to the world also, which smiles and laughs and is ever playing tricks with us. Even prison walls cannot keep this out wholly.

Nan writes that you were all greatly intrigued when you received two books purporting to come from me—a child's edition of *Don Quixote* and a novel by Louis Bromfield. I thought you would be. It happened this way. Early in November the desire to send you something for your birthday caught hold of me. I did not know what to send and how to send it from here. Books were indicated, but how to get them? I happened to have a new catalogue of the New Book Co. or Taraporevalas of Bombay. There were a number of new books mentioned in it. Some of these were by good authors, some others were obscure but something about their names or authorship attracted me—I made a list of about ten books, adding *Don Quixote* for good weight or measure. I felt that *Don Q.* might be interesting reading in prison.¹⁴⁵ Of course I did not mean a child's edition of it. This list was sent subsequently to the Bombay Govt. with the request that they might arrange to purchase and send these books to you on my behalf. Long afterwards I was informed that they could only get two of them and that these had been sent to you. Presumably they were sent to the U.P. Govt. first so that all the formalities and mysteries might be preserved.

Today I am arranging to send you a few more books. They are:

- 1 *A New Anthology of Modern Poetry*
- 2 Ferdinand Czernin : *Europe Going, Going, Gone!*
- 3 Virginia Woolf : *Between the Acts*
- 4 Lewis Carroll : *Complete Works*
- 5 Thomas Reveille : *The Spoil of Europe*
- 6 A pocket diary for 1943
- 7 सौर रोज़नामचा or Hindi diary for Samvat 2000

For most people following the *Samvat* era, the New Year began four days ago with the new moon. But some reformers want to make the months conform to the solar pattern more and they have fixed April 14th as the first day of the year. The *Saur Roznamcha* I am sending you begins on April 14th. Curiously enough this is *Rama Naumi* day, the anniversary, according to the *Samvat*, of your wedding. Among Kashmiris, of course, *Naoroz* (which is a big day for them) takes place according to the lunar reckoning. It was on April 5th last—How did you observe it? Nan wrote that you there welcomed in the New Year (January 1st) in proper style.

145. Cervantes wrote this humorous novel when he was in jail for non-payment of debts.

The coming of a New Year always affects us, or most of us, as if we were really turning over a new leaf. What then of a new century, and even more so, a new millennium (in the mathematical sense)? You will remember how in the past this has led to great excitement. The end of the first 1000 years after Christ led to Peter the Hermit¹⁴⁶ and widespread hysteria and the Crusades. Most people in Christendom thought that the world was ending. A thousand years after the hegira also made people imagine that the old world was ending and a 'new order' was going to begin. Akbar tried to give a push to this by his *Din-e-Ilahi*¹⁴⁷—But the world did not change very much.

Now for years past people have dreamed and imagined and prophesied that *Samvat* 2000 was the critical year in human history. Well, there is enough of crisis all over the place to justify that prediction at least! But what will come out of it is more than the stoutest of prophets can say. Always the human mind, consciously or subconsciously, yearns for a change for the better and builds up castles in the air of a better world to come—usually as if by a miracle. But miracles only seem to occur in old books. A New Year! Yet every day is a new beginning for us, every moment, the old world dies and something new takes its place. How many dead selves we have, each one of us, about us, round which cluster innumerable memories! We seem to be continually dying and being continually reborn—Every moment that is past is dead and we who lived it are dead with it; every moment that is yet to come is a mystery and we look with hope towards it.

And so may it be well with you in this new *Samvat* year and the new century and the new millennium, and as the mystery of the future unfolds itself in the brief living present, may it ever bring fulfilment to your being.

Today we have completed eight months, and you just seven months, for we had a month's start of you. And the summer months, long and hot, steal over us, to give place later to the miracle of the rains. So the cycle of nature goes round, heedless apparently of what happens to that insignificant animal man, who presumes so much and yet is so beast-like still. Yet he has something big, something worthwhile in him and perhaps, perhaps.....

I am glad you have been spending some time over Sanskrit and Hindi. Sanskrit is really wonderful—I wish I knew it well. But I am past

146. (1050-1115); French popular preacher who, in 1095, inspired many to go on the first crusade for the reconquest of the Holy Land.

147. The Universal Faith.

learning it now—I am stupid at languages. Yet it is something even to be able to read Kalidas or Bhavabhuti with some understanding.

I have asked Betty to arrange with a fruiterer in Bombay to send you a weekly parcel of fruit—I hope this reaches you in good condition.

Nan writes that Feroze has been transferred to Fyzabad. That is a pity for in Naini you could sometimes see him.

My *Glimpses of World History* came out in an American edition last year. A copy of it managed to reach me here. It is exactly like the English edition, even the cover. It is amusing to learn that many persons, who had previously not cared to read it thinking it a child's book, are now, in prison, reading it and finding out how mistaken they were. Mahmud is so enamoured of it that he wants to read its thousand pages again and again. Pantji is sufficiently impressed, and so, Betty writes, is Raja in Yeravda Prison.

As I was writing this letter news came of the death of Maulana's wife. In a sense we had been partly prepared for bad news. Still hardly anyone here expected this sudden end. She had not been well for some time but only two months ago she was well enough to plan to go to the hills. Some sudden change pulled her down—It is a great shock to all of us, and you can well imagine what it is for the Maulana—I have come to know him very intimately during these months here. I knew well how full of learning he was, how wise in counsel. I have found him to be also a very brave and gallant gentleman, a finished product of the culture that, in these disturbed days, unhappily pertains to few—I am greatly exercised. I wish I could do something for him. But what can I do? I hardly dare go to him.

I am writing separately to Nan. I shall send this letter to Anand Bhawan as her parole has been extended—But it is just possible that she may miss my letter.

You must feel a little lonely since Chand left you. I do not yet know who your other companions are except that Nora is with you. A little dose of more or less solitary living is not bad for one, provided one can adapt oneself to it. In a sense you have had experience of it in sanatoria in Switzerland—But what a comparison I make!—Naini Prison and a Swiss sanatorium at Leysin.

I have been reading Bernard Shaw's plays again. Twice I have read them previously and seen some of them on the stage. And now for the third time I am going through the lot. It is surprising how much there is in them. What a wise man he is, full of the deepest understanding of life, which often he covers with his levity and over-smartness. Few writers provoke me to thought so much as he does. I am sorry when I think that I am never likely to meet him. He is 87 years

old now—I once saw him at Cambridge when I was an undergraduate there. Not again.

Love,

Your loving
Papu

April 13—Tuesday

At last a letter from Indu from Naini Prison—after seven months! It was dated 25th March and has thus taken just 20 days to reach me. It was in answer to my first letter dated March 5th. It is a cheerful letter which pleased me greatly, except for one or two glimpses into her life which were distressing—being locked up every night at 7 p.m. and having to spend the long evenings and nights in a hot mosquito-infested barrack by the light of a hurricane lantern.

x

x

x

x

Today was our weighing day. I lost another pound or two and am now 131 pounds—a drop of 12 lbs. since I came here—yet I feel perfectly healthy and fit, only definitely thinner.

Maulana went down about 5 pounds during the week, possibly six. This after having lost 30 pounds previously. It shows how he has felt the strain and afterwards the shock of his wife's death. Outwardly he has remained his calm, composed and dignified self but his face grows thinner and more lined.

x

x

x

x

Last evening, as we sat after dinner, Kripalani burst out and bitterly complained of the Indian people as a whole. Why should they breed so many traitors—now and throughout history? It was a comprehensive indictment with which I do not agree—Or, to put it differently, I think this species is present in every country in large enough numbers. Given the opportunity they pop up. And in India they have had and have splendid opportunities.

Still it is depressing to think that so many of our people are made of this villainous and contemptible stuff. Has our long subjection eaten so deeply into our souls?

There is another aspect to it which should never be forgotten. We blame our tools and that is always likely to mislead and confuse us. May we not be to blame? Was our thinking all right? It is so easy to cast blame on others for our own mistakes and failures. As individuals we might be entitled to criticise the behaviour of other individuals. But as political leaders, it is not so easy to escape blame for the faults of others. It was our job to understand that material and make the best use of it. It may be, of course, that the best way to train that material is for us to indulge in individual action. If so we must realise this, and realising it, not blame others too much for not coming up to the scratch. Anger and disappointment at want of success are understandable and perhaps inevitable. Yet they are not wholly reasonable if we keep our eyes open. Perhaps Kripalani, and others who may be affected in that way, expected too much, living in a world of their own, and making their wishes father to their thoughts. The magic approach—always a dangerous one, though sometimes rarely the miracle comes off. We are all susceptible to it in varying degrees. Probably I did not expect as much as Kripalani did; I was not so much blinded by the glare of magic—So my disappointment was proportionately less—But there it was and is.

April 14. Wednesday

Ram Naumi today and the first day of *Samvat* 2000 according to the solar reckoning.

The day has brought rumours of another fast by Bapu—probably a fast to death.¹⁴⁸ No reasons are stated, no details are specified. Indeed so far they are rumours only. But I have no doubt they are true. It seems inevitable that Bapu, constituted as he is, should rebel against the living death in prison when all manner of foul and false charges are brought against him. Only a few days ago I wrote something to this effect in this journal.

Elemental forces are at work for good or ill, and Bapu is a bit of an elemental force himself. With all the passion that moved him last year from May to August, which found feeble utterance in his articles

148. There were rumours in April 1943 that Mahatma Gandhi was considering a fast unto death in August; this would be supported by marches to the Viceroy's residence and Government offices.

and statements, and some expression in his last speech¹⁴⁹ at the A.I.C.C.—can he just submit to indefinite imprisonment? His nature will not permit it, nor his sense of responsibility. But why reason about this? Ultimately it is an urge that cannot be suppressed.

So we wait now again for developments and news with our minds troubled and afire.

April 16, 1943

Darling Indu,

At last a letter from you—It was so exciting to have it after this long waiting for it. It came three days ago, just 20 days after you wrote it. Today, I had a letter from Chand also from Anand Bhawan and she gave me some further news of your life together—and about the baby! This is my letter No. 6.

What shall I write to you, my dear? Of course I can write about a host of things. Reading your letter again I realise what a powerful effect jail has on our mental make-ups. It makes us grow up mentally and gives us a different, and perhaps a truer, perspective on life and the world. Partly because we are thrown on our own mental resources much more than elsewhere, partly because of new experiences, new companions, so different from those we are used to. All of us are apt to live and move in our own little grooves, imagining that one's own particular rut is an epitome of the world. It is curious that jail life, which is a terrible narrowing of the world of experience and sensation, often gives us deeper experiences and sensations. It depends on the individual and his or her capacity to receive and profit by these new experiences and thus to grow in mind. Some do not and cannot profit by them and are even injured mentally and, of course, physically. Others develop a richer life, a deeper understanding, a more human outlook and a poise which gives a tone to their whole existence. For my part, I have no doubt that I have managed to profit by my visits to jail. The very lack of things in jail, the absence of normal family and

149. "You have to stand against the whole world although you have to stand alone. You have to stare the world in the face, although the world may look at you with blood-shot eyes. Do not fear. Trust that little thing which resides in the heart. It says 'forsake friends, wife and all, but testify to that for which you have lived, and for which you have to die'."

social life, the long hours alone, the want of the most ordinary amenities we are so used to and take for granted, gives a value and significance to them and we enjoy them all the more when we have the chance. Prison is the true home of that dreadful thing *ennui*, and yet, oddly enough, it teaches us to triumph over it. And so we grow more vital, more aware of the manifold variety of life and even, in a sense, younger in mind. That is, in a sense, a contradiction for the mind grows older too in prison, or at least more mature. But then life is full of such contradictions. Immaturity is not really youth; it is more like childhood.

Being your father, my mind inevitably goes back to a similar period of my own growth. I took a mighty long time in growing—perhaps I am not quite grown-up yet! Or, more correctly, I am grown-up in part only; the rest of me is still struggling to find out and understand. I was amazingly non-grown-up even in my middle twenties and even afterwards the process was slow. Possibly that is why I am still younger in mind and body than almost all my contemporaries. I imagine you are more grown-up now than I was when I was your age. That is easily understandable for you have lived through a far more turbulent period of history than I had done then. My life till then had been quiet and peaceful and almost uneventful—the events were piling up for later days.

It was about the time of your birth, or soon after, that these events started on their mad career. Almost you were a child of a turbulent world. I do not know what memories of these early days you carry about you. But whether you remember them or not, they must have influenced you and subconsciously they must cling to you. You wrote to me once about the old days in Anand Bhawan. But you have no real experience of those old days for the great change came in our lives when you were a babe in arms. It is difficult for the younger generation to picture to themselves that world which vanished, it seems now, so long ago. They have lived all their young lives transitionally, and we have all become travellers and wayfarers marching on and on, sometimes footsore and weary, but without resting place or haven. Yet, for those who can adapt themselves to this continuous journeying, there is no regret and they would not have it otherwise. A return to the dull and uneventful past is unthinkable.

I have few regrets. But one there is that in your childhood and early girlhood I saw so little of you.

Your inside is tough of course, I know that. I want that outside of yours also to grow tough. It is a nuisance otherwise. I am sure that you will succeed in strengthening your body. It requires will and intelligence. Do you know that *Dadu* was considered to be a weakly

infant and the family had a bad record then of disease and early death. Everybody thought that *Dadu* would follow this bad example. But because of this, even in his early boyhood he made up his mind to be strong physically and he took all the care he could. He succeeded. I was also an ailing infant and child and I did not turn the corner till my boyhood. But I did turn the corner and I have since been an unusual example of good health and vitality. This did not happen of itself. I worked to that end.

So I am sure you will get over your physical weakness and your frail body will grow strong and fit. This will take time and require attention. These summer months in Naini, or wherever you might be put, will be a trial for you, for this will be almost your first experience of a summer in the plains. It is unfortunate that this first experience should be in the unwholesome surroundings of Naini Prison—Yet it does not matter and you may be even the better for the experience.

I remember how frightened I used to be of the sun in summer in the early twenties. But somehow I forgot about it when, during the hottest part of the year, I went wandering (without even a sunhat) through the villages. I returned heavily tanned but fit. I then tried another experiment. I used to have an office in Hewett Road then. I decided not to use a fan and I sat there working through the hottest part of the day—and Hewett Road can be hot. I perspired profusely, in fact I had a regular bath of it. My chief trouble was how to write when I was dripping all over and my hand was wet and clammy. But I kept fit and a feeling of triumph came over me. I realised that I was not a slave to the weather or to a climate. I could bear with extreme heat and cold without any great disturbance of my body or mind or temper.

Now I am not suggesting that you should try to indulge in these pranks. Your case is different and should be treated differently. You know well enough how to take yourself in hand. But a time will surely come when you will be as tough in body as I have been and am.

Having to sleep inside a mosquito-infested barrack in this weather is an imposition which only a peculiar type of mind can evolve. How well I know that experience! Not here, but I have had enough of it previously. Perhaps some change has been made since April began—I hope so. I often think of what Bernard Shaw once wrote—that every judge and magistrate and jail official, should, as a matter of course and training, be made to live for a while as an ordinary prisoner. He must know exactly how it feels to undergo the sentences he imposes. A famous governor of the Sing Sing Prison in New York actually did this and lived for some months as an ordinary convict in his own prison.

He became a great reformer of the prison system! Of course no such person can ever undergo the mental agony and have the sense of utter helplessness which a convict has. But even so the physical experience is worthwhile.

I am glad you retire early for the night. Do not read by the wretched light of a hurricane lantern. When I was in Naini I used to go to bed at 8.30 p.m. and get up before four in the morning. About lighting, why do you not use candles? They are much better than the dirty & smoky lanterns.

Presumably you have flit or something like it for the mosquitoes—Keep some lemon grass oil (citronella) also.

You have taken me to task for that book of Louis Bromfield's.¹⁵⁰ So did Nan. I am quite overwhelmed. So I had better confess that I know nothing of the person and, so far as I can remember, have never read a book of his.

Do you do any breathing exercises? I hope you do—gently of course without exerting yourself in any way.

'Female Ward' is an absurd and offensive name. Two years ago Aruna, who was there in the Lahore female prison or ward, agitated about this and she succeeded in getting the name changed to "Women's prison".

Our garden is shrinking daily and drying up. Still there are a good numbers of flowers still out because of the trouble we take over them. They are my 'babies' here and I tend them daily and water them properly. It is surprising how the petunias, hollyhocks, pansies, phloxes have survived. A new generation of zinnias is coming out, so also morning glories and tuberose and some kind of a lily. Coleus (the fancy leaves) is also flourishing and caldium is trying to grow. We hope to have a kind of jasmine मोतिया soon. With the coming of the rains, we shall spread out more. Our soil here is also excessively stony and we had to dig hard and deep before we could plant anything. We came across sometimes remains of old buildings, and once a bit of a wall with a lovely lotus flower carved on it.

I shall ask Betty to arrange to send you Pocha's *Garden Guide* and his small set of garden tools. The book is not up to much? Still it may help.

I do not remember having seen Methuen's *Anthology of Modern Verse*. I have just been reading Aurobindo Ghose's *Essays on the Gita*. What fine English prose he writes and his amazing lucidity. He writes

150. (1896–1956); American novelist and playwright whose works include *Night in Bombay*.

quite tolerable verse also with an occasional line of good poetry. His background of Greek, Latin & Sanskrit has been excellent training.

You will be amused to learn that Nandita, who is in Rajshahi Jail, is threatening to become plump. Sucheta writes that she is worried as this will interfere with her dancing.

My arm has given me some trouble since I came here but it is very much better now. Occasionally when I play badminton I have a twinge of pain. Otherwise it functions normally. I thought at first that badminton caused the pain and so I gave it up. This did no good. So I started again. I think what has done it good is the daily carrying of bucketfuls of water for the plants and flowers!

Do you have any badminton or any other game? I suppose there are not too many people with you who can join up in this. Nora is with you—give her my love. Who else is with you?

We are just fixing up with Narendra Deva to read the *Kadambari* with him. This is a big book and I doubt if we shall ever go through it. It is a laborious process. Still it is rather fascinating to read this ancient romance in Sanskrit—probably one of the earliest novel-like books in the world.

I read the other day a review of a book—a collection of writings, chiefly poems, by women in Sanskrit—*Women Writers in Sanskrit*. It is all old stuff of course. Four volumes have already come out and two more are due

It is surprising what a mass of literature in Sanskrit we possess and how little we know about it. In spite of enormous destruction and loss, and the fact that a large number of manuscripts are buried in religious institutions and have not so far been properly traced, there are at present about 60000 manuscripts, big and small, properly catalogued! Only a small proportion of these have so far been printed. What a lot of work we have to do when we have the chance!

The night is far advanced and it is amazingly quiet and peaceful. Everybody is asleep, excepting me. The new moon of the new *Samvat*, eleven days old, is casting its radiance on everything and seems so unconcerned, as if nothing was the matter with this mad world of unhappy and warring mortals. Yet behind this apparent peace there is trouble all over the world.

Everybody here sends you his love—more especially Pantji, Mahmud, Kripalani and Asaf Ali—The Maulana is bearing up wonderfully but the shock of his wife's death has been a hard one and he shows it.

I have written enough—The censors will probably say much more than enough. So let us give them some peace now and a respite from their heavy toils.

My love to you, darling one—

Your loving
Papu

16-4-43

Betty darling,

I wrote to you just two weeks ago. Since then I have not heard from you. I suppose you went to Allahabad and possibly stayed there longer than you had at first intended. I have had no news. Nan's extension of parole must have led to some change in the children's programme. I suppose they are still in Allahabad.

Indu is keeping well so far. But the summer is upon us.

The death of Maulana's wife has been a great blow to us all and we have lived for some days under the shadow of gloom. He has behaved wonderfully, as he always does, but he cannot hide the changes that have taken place in his face by just outward behaviour. He has grown thin and his face is all lined. I am worried about him. These people who feel deeply and yet do not show their feelings and grief have a way of harming themselves. I wish I could help him or be of some service to him, but there is little outlet for it here.

Since I wrote to you last the new *Samvat* has rolled in—*Naoroz* and all that follows. 2000 is an impressive number and sounds significant. It is likely to be pretty significant in this world of ours. Whatever it may bring of good or ill, all of us must face it with good heart and stout will. I hope you do not worry and keep cheerful.

Send me news of Raja. I hope he is keeping well and busy with reading and other activities.

My love to you.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

April 17 Saturday

Three events happened today which ruffled the composure of my mind.

Last night I wrote a long letter to Indu and also a letter to Betty. I sent them to the office this morning. A couple of hours later I received a letter from Betty from Bombay. She had been to Allahabad and had come back. The girls had not accompanied her as Nan's parole had been extended and so they stayed on with their mother for another ten or twelve days.

I had written to Betty previously to send fruit to Indu—It appears she did so but the jail authorities refused to accept it. Not allowed to detenus. Now this is allowed for medical reasons—presumably the relaxation of the rule is for Indu only.

No newspapers are allowed in Naini. So for the eight months and more Nan, Indu as well as Ranjit, Tandon &c have had no newspapers. And that must apply to all U.P. detenus—perhaps to convicts also. As there are no interviews and no letters there has been complete isolation. The more I thought of this, the angrier I felt.

Possibly Indu & Nan might be transferred to Dehra Dun—to my old barrack!

What surprised me, however, in Betty's letter was the news that Chand & Tara were going to America to join college there. Nan had not mentioned this to me in her letter; nor had Chand who sent me a delightful letter only a few days ago. Possibly matters had not matured till then and Nan did not want to say anything in a letter to a jail just then. Anyway Nan & Ranjit had decided this and on coming out Nan cabled to Wellesley College in America, to Madame Chiang, and Frances Gunther. Wellesley, I suppose, is Mme. Chiang's old college. Whether the others answered or not, I do not know, but Wellesley has cabled back agreeing to take the girls. So now steps are being taken to send them off as early as possible. Not an easy job. Probably only way is by air and that, too, if the American authorities help. And then passports.

I was somewhat taken aback by this development, but I recovered soon and reacted in favour of it. The more I think of it the more I like the idea of Chand & Tara going to the U.S.A. for study. There is, and can be in the near future, no proper atmosphere for study here or for normal growth. I am sure Chand will profit by this visit to the U.S. I am not so sure about Tara, but even in her case I think, everything considered, that it is worthwhile.

What a fine girl Chand is developing into. I like her and have liked her of course but, as she grows, I am beginning to look upon her as a worthwhile person. She is intelligent, balanced, has grit and the right urges. She ought to do something in her future life. I liked her recent letters to me greatly.

Well—this is event No. 1.—Chand & Tara going, or thinking of going, to America.

No. 2.—In the early afternoon today when I went to do Urdu with Mahmud, one or two unthinking questions by me led to some remarks about the political situation. What Mahmud said hurt and angered me suddenly and I flared up, using rather hard language. I proclaimed further that as we differed so radically in regard to basic political questions, and indeed about our whole outlook on life, I shall in future not discuss politics with him. I wonder if I shall succeed in keeping this promise.

I was sorry for my outburst. Nevertheless it is amazing how weak and flabby Mahmud is. (As for Asaf he has completely gone to pieces). A curious irony of fate to put us all together on the Working Committee.

No. 3.—I had hardly recovered from this outburst when I saw the day's paper with a big headline about me—Something that Mme. Chiang had said in America—It was pleasing that she had referred to India and me.¹⁵¹ But the odd sentences which came over—disjointed as they were—did not leave a very pleasant impression on me. Her reference to Bapu¹⁵²—Her saying that the only question about India's freedom was the time and extent of it—Time? Extent?—It is unfair to judge her statement from some odd remarks obviously taken out of the context. Still they produce mixed feelings in me—It is clear that she has done her utmost to help our cause and is continuing her efforts. In her position & in America she cannot be very outspoken.

A stupid leader in *The Times of India* on Mme. Chiang's remarks.¹⁵³ Trying to be soft & kind to me—I am a good boy and all that, mean

151. On 14 April 1943, Madame Chiang Kai-shek demanded that Jawaharlal, "a man of burning conviction and world vision", should be released to throw India's political weight on the side of the United Nations.

152. Madame Chiang had also said that Mahatma Gandhi had no world vision because he was overcome by "his restricted obsession for India's freedom regardless of world conditions."

153. 17 April: "... we feel strongly, in view of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's zeal for the Allied cause and his talk of guerilla warfare to resist the Japanese, that he was never happy over the civil disobedience resolution. We are convinced that he is even less happy about it today... A time has come in view of Mr. Gandhi's obduracy for right-wing Congressmen to assert themselves."

well etc., hinting that some Congressmen should form a new party in opposition to the official party &c. A faint suggestion that I might do this job! How deeply do our English friends understand us! I would sooner consign myself and everybody else to hell before I did such a thing or indeed anything which involves a betrayal of my colleagues or a lining up with the British Govt. as it is functioning in India today. I do not think I have ever—during the last quarter of a century—felt quite so bitter against this British Govt. as I do today.

An unusual day.

April 23rd 1943

Darling,

Your second letter, dated 6th April, reached me yesterday. About a page and a quarter of it was blacked out! Presumably this was done in Naini for it has the typical U.P. jail look about it. A varied and extensive experience of these black-outs makes one look at them from an expert's viewpoint. They have these particular and individual features which stand out for recognition. The Bombay Secretariat's black-outs, to which I have been used for these last seven or eight months, are easily distinguishable and characteristic. They are neater and cleaner and sometimes almost artistic. Not so the efforts of the Naini Prison staff, which are just a mess.

I hope the parcel of books I sent you a month and a half ago has reached you by this time. Three days ago I sent you (or rather for you) another parcel, a small one containing:

- 1 Kalidasa's *Shakuntala* &c. English translation
- 2 Proust's *Swann's Way*, 2 volumes
- 3 Nym Wales : *China Builds for Democracy*
- 4 *Roget's Thesaurus*, 2 vols.
- 5 *A Dictionary of Dates*.

7 Volumes

This is the 3rd parcel sent to you so far.

The last mentioned two books are reference books. I do not know if they will be any use to you but I have found such books rather fascinating in prison. Anyway Ranjit will like the thesaurus, if he has not got it already. It is helpful in translation work.

I see from the newspapers that *Puphi* has gone back to Naini and joined you there and that the children have gone to Bombay. I am writing to Chand today, so I shall not write to Nan. Perhaps I might

write to her next week. I have an idea that I shall receive a letter from her soon.

I had a letter from Betty in which she told me that Chand & Tara were going to America to join Wellesley College there. Later I read about this in a newspaper. The news was unexpected and my mind was in no way prepared for it, as Nan had not mentioned it in her letter. I suppose when she wrote no final arrangements had been made. Having recovered from the initial surprise, I found myself approving strongly of the step taken. The more I think of it, the more I like it. It is easy of course to point out the difficulties and disadvantages of two young girls being sent all the way to America for their education, especially during these troubled times here and elsewhere. Whatever we may do, whichever way we may turn, there is an abundance of these difficulties and objections. But I feel sure that, in the balance, a right decision has been taken. I suppose it is no easy matter for Chand & Tara to get passages to America—Probably the only way to go there is by air. I hope they will get through. I could have given them many letters to friends in the U.S. But that is neither possible, nor is it really necessary. They will not lack for friends who are eager to help them.

The last two or three lines in your letter have upset me somewhat. What is the idea of trying fancy exercises and hurting yourself badly in the process? I must revise my opinion of you—You are not as wise as I took you to be. These sprains and hurts are a terrible nuisance and hang round one for a long time and generally interfere with bodily health and progress. Surely you should avoid them. Having myself had some experience of this kind of thing, I avoid any exercise which might even accidentally cause a sprain or strain me too much—So please be careful. Do any exercise you like provided it does not tire at all, is not jerky, causes no strain whatever or any other feeling of discomfort, and makes you feel fresher and livelier at the end of it. Above all do the breathing exercises. Do not do the *shirshasana*.

I was somewhat surprised to learn of the possibility of your receiving a letter from Yunus. I shall convey your message to Betty—that will be two weeks' hence probably. She has just written to say that she has heard again from Yunus and that he is progressing and generally better.

I have had no news of Bebee ever since I came here except a rare reference in the newspaper. You know perhaps that she was arrested and detained in prison some time in September last, but was released after ten days or a fortnight. A few of the books that Betty sent me came from Bebee.

I am surprised and distressed to know that you people are still—in April—locked up in your barracks at night. This is bad enough at any time of the year but during the summer this is a near approach to the nether regions. The U.P. jails had a definite rule that sleeping out was allowed from April 1st onwards. Has that too gone overboard with so much else? We progress—

Betty writes to me that her previous attempts to send you fruit were not successful as this was *defendu-verboten* in Naini—Latterly, however, 'on medical grounds' you are allowed to receive it. I hope you are getting it regularly from Bombay.

You ask me about our food. Now, that is a highly intricate problem of which we have found no very satisfactory solution so far. So far as I am concerned there is no great difficulty for I am content with *dalia*, eggs and bread & butter as a basis for any meal, with some vegetables added sometimes. But we have as many tastes and habits of food as there are people here and the cooking is very mediocre. Occasionally we have some sort of meat. Our usual meals are: coffee, *dalia* and bread & butter in the morning at 7.30; a Maharashtrian variety of rice, dal & vegetables at 11 a.m.; tea, bread &c., & some fruit at 4; and the Maharashtrian variety repeated at 8 p.m.; but some of us simply have eggs & some vegetables. (We keep the old time and not the new war time which is an hour in advance.) Each of us adapts himself to this food with individual variations. Several are invalids requiring special diets. Maulana has found it hardest to adapt himself as he has very special tastes and habits.

We all feed together very punctually. Indeed our punctuality is remarkable. Maulana cannot tolerate the slightest unpunctuality in meals and because of him we have to keep strictly to time, measuring it not only with minutes but almost with seconds. Seven of us have undertaken a general supervision of meals by turns, a week each. This does not mean supervision of cooking but chiefly of the exact hour of the meal and to see that the table is properly laid &c. Occasionally there is some private cooking, if I may call it so. But nobody is very keen on it and so it is gradually dropping out, except on special occasions. Kripalani has a particular knack of producing good cakes with the most insufficient materials.

My own timetable at present (for it has varied with the seasons and otherwise also) is: Up soon after 5 a.m.—some gentle exercises, *asans* &c. for a few minutes—breathing exercises—then about an hour watering the plants—I was forgetting to mention that I do some running also, up and down our yard (about 200 ft.)—I run about a quarter of

a mile. All this loosens my limbs without tiring them at all. Then I shave & bathe and I am ready just in time for the 7.30 breakfast.

From 8 to 11 some solid reading or like work—usually a heavy kind of book. After food from 12 to 1 Urdu with Mahmud—From 1 to 3 newspapers & reading some light book. Sometimes going to sleep in the process. From 3 to 4 listening to Narendra Deva's translation of the *Kadambari*—tea &c. From 4.30 to 5.30 Hindi with Mahmud— Then wandering about our plants & pots, badminton, small talk &c. Bath and dinner— After dinner conversation for a short while with Maulana and others, till he retires. Then I read— To bed at 10.30 or so. And so I sink into forgetfulness or dreams or fitful sleep, occasionally (as has been my habit) shouting in my sleep! The other night Maulana told me that I was shouting: 'I am dreaming'—मैं इत्राब देख रहा हूँ !

Everybody else's programme is different except that meals are common functions. Maulana gets up at about 3.30 a.m. and sometimes even sooner—

Your mention of Otto¹⁵⁴ reminded me of the painful and strenuous hours I spent with it just about ten years ago in Barcilly jail. If you have got my copy of it you will see it marked and dated all over the place. I went through it bravely and did every single one of the exercises (I had the key) till I began to think that I had a fair grounding of German. I could read and write with some difficulty. I left it at that, imagining that when I went to Germany I could easily pick up the spoken tongue. But curiously enough I made no progress at all in Badenweiler, and, as you will remember, I was peculiarly dense on the subject of the German language. Partly this was due to my pre-occupation with other matters which filled my mind; partly because of the psychological reaction of the anti-Nazi feeling which possessed me.

You suggest that I should write Urdu verses in my letters. I had thought of that but I desisted as I feared that my letters might be delayed if they contained any Urdu or Hindi. Indeed I would have written to you in Hindi sometimes but for this apprehension. I know that Urdu & Hindi letters are delayed, probably because of insufficient arrangements in regard to censoring. Anyway now that you ask for it, I am giving you two simple couplets. Probably they will lead the censors to employ sleuth-hounds to find out the inner meaning that lies behind them— It will not do you much good to get Ghalib.¹⁵⁵ He is very difficult as a rule. I think you had better stick to simple books,

154. Emil Otto, author of *German Conversation and Grammar*.

155. Asadullah Khan Ghalib (1797-1869).

even though they are uninteresting, and get used to writing by copying from the books. Only thus will you impress the images of words in your mind —

Here are two easy verses. The first couplet is by Ghalib and the second by a person rejoicing in the name of Taba Tabai.¹⁵⁶ *Jannat* means heaven or paradise.

ہم کو معلوم ہے جنت کی حقیقت لیکن
دل کے خوش رکھنے کو غالب یہ خیال اچھا ہے (غالب)

The same in Hindi:

हम को मालूम है जन्नत की हकीकत लेकिन ।
दिल को खुश रखने को ग़ालिब यह ख़याल अच्छा है ॥¹⁵⁷

اس طرح طے ہم نے کی ہیں • نزلیں
گر گئے، گر کر اٹھے، اٹھ کر چلے (نظم طباطبائی)

In Hindi:

इस तरह तैं हम ने की हैं मंज़िलें ।
गिर गए—गिर कर उठे—उठ कर चले ॥¹⁵⁸

Today is Good Friday—I have decided to take a week's holiday from Urdu & Hindi learning & teaching as well as from other laborious work. Not that I work hard. But a change always freshens one.

This is my letter No. 7 to you.

Tell Nan that Betty's account of her to me was not at all a pleasing one. She wrote that Nan was not looking well and had a tired and worn out expression as if she was older. This kind of thing is highly unfitting in a sister of mine. She must get well and keep well—Give her my love —

I suppose I must end this letter, for not to do so would be cruelty to the censor. And yet it is so easy to write on and there is so much to say— But I desist.

Love, *caressima* —

Your loving
Papu

156. Haider Ali Nazm Taba Tabai.

157. Ghalib : The truth about Paradise I do know;
But it's a good idea, Ghalib,
to keep one pleased!

158. Taba Tabai : So have we crossed the way :
Down we fell, we raised ourselves,
Onward we did go!

April 25 — Sunday

It is odd. The very day I send off my weekly letter or letters, I get letters from outside, usually a couple of hours after. I have fixed my writing day now, and invariably write on Friday evening & night, handing over the letters on Saturday morning to the Supdt. In the forenoon I usually get a letter. This has happened five times so far as I can remember.

I wrote a long letter to Indu last Friday & a letter to Chand—These were handed over to the office yesterday morning and within an hour or two I was given two letters—one from Betty and the other from Chand. I wished I had received this second letter before sending off my letter to Chand. I may not be able to write to her again. She is likely to go off to America fairly soon.

Chand's letter impressed and pleased me greatly. It was a fine, balanced and determined letter. I have no doubt at all that it is right for her and Tara to go to the U.S. for study. Chand appears to me very nearly the ideal girl student for this purpose.

What surprises and distresses me a little is Betty's attitude of disapproval. She talks about risks and dangers and all manner of possible consequences, and further says that all the people she has consulted (presumably in Bombay) are equally opposed to this idea of sending the girls to the U.S. for education in war time. I am afraid Betty's friends, in spite of their modernity, are apt to think on old-fashioned lines—There is far too much of 'safety first' about it to my liking. In this world of death and destruction and constant struggle and risk, it is surprising that people still think (and act) in the old terms.

Chand is a treasure and I am sure she will justify herself in the U.S. and after.

x

x

x

x

There is a rumour, reproduced in a Marathi paper, that Bapu intends to go on a fast—probably an indeterminate one or a fast to death—from August 9th, if the situation does not change by then. Aug. 9th is the anniversary of our arrest. There is nothing inherently improbable about this. Apparently he has given long notice to the Viceroy.

April 28—Wednesday

I have sent off today a packet of flower seeds to Indu to the N.C.P., through the Bombay Govt. of course. Nearly all of them grown by us here. For some days past I have been wondering where Indu is likely to be—Repeated hints reach me that she and Nan are going to be sent to another jail in a better climate, probably to Dehra Dun. If so the summer is on us and the sooner they are sent the better.

Last Friday I finished at last the *Durbar-i-Akbari*.¹⁵⁹ I was tired of it. I decided to take a holiday from Urdu as well as from teaching Hindi to Mahmud. So I am having ten days off—Easter holidays! I have liked this change. Next Monday we go back to the old routine.

x

x

x

x

During these days, having more leisure, I have done various odd things which I had neglected for a while. Also read more. Spent more time with Maulana discussing past political events—going back 20 years and then working up to today. This talk has been illuminating and sometimes a little disturbing. Many new factors came to light and I lay awake at night thinking of them—The talks continue.

x

x

x

x

Jinnah's speech at the Muslim League Conference.¹⁶⁰ Blatant, vulgar, offensive, egoistical, vague—in fact it was Jinnah's speech. The papers say that compared to his previous utterances it is milder. Perhaps. The standard he has set for political utterances is low enough. What a man! And what a misfortune for India and for the Muslims that he should have so much influence!

I feel depressed about it. Nothing that the British Govt. could do could depress me so much. There is no way out, so far as I can see, except a real bust-up in India with all its horrid consequences. We cannot build anew on the old foundations.

159. A book on Akbar's rule, written by Mohamad Hussain Azad (d. 1910), who was a professor of Arabic in the Government College, Lahore.

160. Jinnah had said that for Mahatma Gandhi "there is no politics but religion" and all his attempts had been "to turn the whole of India into a Gandhi ashram." For twenty-five years Hindu leaders had "systematically paved the way for establishing a Hindu raj".

50-4-43

Darling Betty,

Last week I wrote to Chand and sent the letter care of you. However, I have already given her my opinion about the visit to America.

The first news about Chand and Tara going to America for their studies reached me through your letters. Then I saw a small paragraph in the newspaper, and later Chand wrote to me more fully on the subject. Naturally I was a little surprised to learn of this as it had not occurred to me previously. But my immediate reaction was in its favour and the more I have thought of it, the more I have liked it. Anyway the alternative to joining college in America is to try to carry on with the university here. At any time that is not a particularly attractive proposition; just at present it is less attractive than ever.

As for risk or possible danger involved in the journey, that surely cannot, or should not, be a reason against the proposal. To my mind it is an inducement in favour of it. We have never made 'safety first' our motto and I hope we never will. In this world full of risk and danger we must take our share of them and not shirk them. It would be bad training indeed for the girls to be made to feel that they must avoid risks and dangers at all costs. They are old enough to learn to look after themselves and to face the world with, of course, all the help we can give them. But without that help also, if necessary. We must adjust ourselves to what is happening around us and to what is likely to happen in the future. We cannot, Micawber-like, just go on hoping for something to turn up.

So I am quite clear in my mind that it is the right and proper thing for Chand and Tara to go to the U.S. for their studies and the sooner they go the better. They can and should only go by air. The possibility of their being stranded in Cairo or elsewhere does not worry me in the least. Some such adventure would be good for them.

My love to Raja and you.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

May 1st Saturday—May Day!

Wrote to Nan (N.C.P.) & Betty yesterday. I held up the letters till forenoon today half expecting a letter from Indu or Nan. Usually they have come on Saturday mornings. None came—

I have sent instructions to Betty to inform Walsh, my American publisher, to pay my royalties to Chand. I am afraid these royalties will not amount to much. The first flush of the sales is over—Still they may help Chand & Tara a little.

x

x

x

x

An advertisement by the Red Cross in *The Statesman* caught my attention. It was about *Stacheldrahtfieber*—barbed wire fever—a “word coined by the German medical-military authorities to describe an ailment peculiar to many prisoners of war.” “It rots the soul of man as thoroughly as cancer destroys his body.” “Men accustomed to a free and active life cannot endure long this terrible monotony of a prison camp and the eternal horizon of barbed wire and armed guards.” “It requires a strong will power not to succumb to despair & not to lose hope.” &c, &c.

Hence a request for donations to send frequently & regularly parcels to prisoners of war in enemy countries. This contact with homeland nips *Stacheldrahtfieber* in the bud. Health of mind & body &c., &c.

x

x

x

x

Immediately I thought of our tens of thousands of people in prison here.¹⁶¹ But there was this difference: they cannot get parcels or anything from outside. For a large number of them: no interviews, no letters, no books even from outside, no writing materials, no contacts from outside, no newspapers—and prison life, which is more constrained than life in a prison camp with barbed wire. High walls much worse than barbed wire.

It is true that prisoners of war have no home interviews &c., but this is because this is impossible. Here it is easily possible—In every way the lot of the political prisoner infinitely worse.

161. The official estimate for the period till the end of 1942 was : Persons arrested—60,229; persons detained under the Defence of India Rules—18,000.

May 7th—8th 1943

Darling,

This is my letter No. 8. I did not write to you last week as I wanted to write to the two *Puphis*. You must have seen my letter to Nan.

Two days ago I received your letter dated April 12th/13th—No. 3. It took a longer time than usual in coming—23 days. I learnt from it that you had just then received the case of books I had sent you. Since then I have sent you two small packets of books, and yesterday I sent yet another—the fourth. I have decided to send you small parcels of books as these can go by post and thus save time and trouble to everybody.

Yesterday's parcel contained:

- 1 Voltaire's *The Best of All Possible Worlds*
- 2 Chiang Yee: *The Men of the Burma Road*
- 3 Peter Abrahams: *Dark Testament*
- 4 Plato: *Five Dialogues*
- 5 Chekhov: *Plays & Stories*
- 6 *The Upakhyān-mālā*

7 Two Reports & 4 Bulletins of the Commission to Study Organization of Peace.

8 Four copies of the *Reader's Digest*—last year's numbers

No. 7 above were sent to me by your friend Stinnes from New York and they managed to reach me after a devious journey.

Your description of the storm in Naini reminded me of some stormy weather we have recently had here—even more so of some terrific storms we had in Bareilly Central Prison. How well I remember that envelope of dust which wrapped itself round everybody and everything. There was no escape from it as there are no doors in the prison barracks which can be closed—only bars; how cheerful they are! At night the effect was even more disconcerting.

Probably it is much hotter now in Naini than it was when you wrote. The Allahabad temperature now is said to be 109°F. Here we have not so far gone beyond 105°F or so. Even that is disagreeable enough and the nights are close and stuffy. I sleep in the open with a mosquito net and I keep fanning myself with a small handfan. What it must be like inside a barrack at night in the shadow of high walls is a thought that is very far from pleasant.

I was a little surprised to learn of your food. There used to be fixed rations at Naini of two kinds and a choice was possible. One consisted of rice, dal, *ata*, ghee &c., the other of loaf of bread, butter &c. I used

to take the latter as it suited me. Obviously it would suit you also. Or it may be possible for one of you to take one kind of ration and someone else to take the other. I hope at any rate you have plenty of fresh vegetables.

As for fruit I have arranged for a weekly parcel to be sent to you from Bombay and this will, I hope, continue. There is no point in stopping it for a while.

If you want me to arrange to have sent any message about your Tagore Town house to your sister-in-law I could perhaps manage it through *Choti Puphi*—It is a very complicated and roundabout way of doing things but for the present there is no help for it. Perhaps it is hardly worthwhile worrying about the house and it might well continue as it is. If Mrs Verma¹⁶² is staying there, nothing should be done to inconvenience her, and indeed we should go out of our way to help her. Whenever you go out, and perhaps you may be out long before I emerge, I should like you to stay in Anand Bhawan.

A few days ago I was informed by the Bombay Govt. that a book previously ordered by me, called *Virginia Woolf*,¹⁶³ had been forwarded to you. I was surprised. The only time I asked for books to be sent to you was six months back, for your birthday. That was when you got those two odd books which surprised you—I suppose this is a left-over from that order—Presumably the book is Forster's life of Virginia Woolf—It should be good.

What has happened to that fine mare which Nawabzada gave you in Lahore?

You ask me about my arm—I think I have already written to you about it. I tried various massages, ointments—I gave it long rest from any kind of exercises—but the pain continued. Then I decided to deal with it in a different manner—through regulated exercise. I think the carrying of pailfuls of water was especially good for it as this stretched the muscles. Anyway it is far better now than it has been at any time during the last two years or more. It is almost quite well—Only occasionally when I give a somewhat violent twist, does it pain me.

I have had a curious experience in connection with this arm. There is electric current here and Mahmud was given some simple electric

162. The wife of an active Congressman who was a friend of Feroze Gandhi.

163. E.M. Forster's Rede Lecture delivered at Cambridge suggesting that Virginia Woolf was a poet, who wanted to write something as near to a novel as possible.

treatment here for some pain. It was suggested that I might also indulge in this for my arm. Being always agreeable to having new sensations & experiences I readily agreed—not that this electric business was very novel. So a mild current was passed through my arm for a few minutes. No obvious results. Next time, a few days later, a stiffer and a larger dose was proposed. While this was being given, and the force of the current increased, I was asked : Can you bear it? An odd question, or at any rate oddly put. I can bear a good bit in the way of pain and if it is for my good, I saw no reason to object. So I bore it without a whisper. When it was all over and my arm was unwrapped, it was discovered that my skin and some tissues had been burnt up to some extent. It was entirely my fault for quietly submitting to this ordeal without pointing out that something untoward was happening. Anyway it took about three weeks for this burn to heal and I have got a biggish mark on my forearm which I am likely to carry to the end of my days. It is as well to have a permanent souvenir of this place.

A week ago Beatrice Webb¹⁶⁴ died at her country-house where you and I visited her five years ago. Her age was stated to be 85. I thought she was even older. What a magnificent woman she was! Bernard Shaw said about her on her eightieth birthday, or thereabouts, that he was amazed that such a woman “should survive in apparently undiminished vigour after 80 years among fools and savages who will rise to nothing but ecstasies of murder.” That compliment or observation could well be passed on to G. B. S. himself for he has managed to survive for an even longer period, and is yet full of vigour and mental alertness. He is 87 now.

How well I remember that visit of ours to Sydney & Beatrice Webb. Sydney was definitely the weaker of the two and I would have thought that he would not survive his wife. (I suppose he is still alive—I am not sure.) The walk across country we had with this lady of 80 and the light springy step she had! But what was really amazing was the up-to-dateness and mental alertness she displayed. It was a privilege to meet her and I shall long cherish her memory. You have a visible token of that visit—the book she gave you—

In my last letter I gave you an account of how I spent my day—a regular timetable was outlined. Such timetables seldom last and anyway this one went to pieces very soon after. The Urdu and Hindi lessons were suspended because Mahmud was not well, the reading of

164. (1858–1943); wife of Sydney Webb (1859–1947); both were eminent British socialists; in 1932 they visited Russia and in 1935 they published *Soviet Communism: A New Civilization?* in two volumes.

the *Kadambari* came to a sudden end because Narendra Deva was not well. So my so-called Easter holidays have been unduly prolonged for unfortunate reasons.

However, Maulana carries on with his astonishing punctuality. There is a story about Kant, the German philosopher, that for 20 or 30 years he used to go out punctually at 5 p.m. for his walk and all his neighbours and many others corrected their watches and clocks as soon as they saw him. So, whenever Maulana is to be seen slowly walking in the direction of the place where we feed, one can say definitely that it is 30 seconds to the time fixed for the meal.

A few days ago I read in a newspaper some extracts from a review¹⁶⁵ in the *American Current History* of my book *Glimpses of World History* which has recently appeared in the U.S. The review was very friendly and eulogistic and, as an author, I felt very puffed up. He said that it was a better survey of world history than H. G. Wells' *Outline*. I have not seen any other reviews yet—It was just ten years ago, in Dehra Jail, that I was writing it, and I seldom thought of publication then—Mostly I thought of you—

Hogben's *Mathematics for the Million* is, from all accounts, a very good book. I have been trying to get it myself. If you have got it, read it. I do not remember what I told you about it five years ago or more—Probably I made some inane remark, not knowing the book.

Some time back I sent you flower seeds grown in our little garden here. Use them in the rains, or some of them at least.

Here are two verses by Ghalib :

ہے آدمی بجائے خود ایک محشر خیال
ہم انجن سمجھتے ہیں خلوت ہی کیوں نہ ہو (غالب)

The same in Hindi—

है आदमी वजाए खुद एक महशरे खयाल ।
हम अंजुमन समझते हैं खलवत ही क्यों न हो ॥¹⁶⁶

165. "... the book is considered as a mirror of Nehru's mind and feelings rather than as a history book. Throughout there burns the consuming fire of his devotion to India, and as his story draws to its climax Nehru bursts into a long, impassioned indictment of British imperialist domination.... Yet, here is manifested one of his noblest and most appealing traits, his universal understanding.... He cautions against hating individual Englishmen.... They are part of a system."

166. Ghalib : Man is himself
a tumultuous world of thought;
A company all around me I feel
even if I am all alone!

महशर means a crowd—खलवत is being alone, solitary रोज़-ए-महशर is Judgment Day—presumably because the biggest crowd will be seen there.

نا کردہ گناہوں کی بھی حسرت کی ملے داد
(غالب) یا رب اگر ان کردہ گناہوں کی سزا ہے

The same in Hindi:

नाकर्दा गुनाहों की भी हसरत की मिले दाद।
यारब ! अगर इन कर्दा गुनाहों की सजा है ॥¹⁶⁷

The first couplet tells us that man is not just a simple individual but a crowd of thoughts and ideas. Even when he is by himself, he is a kind of meeting or debating society all inside himself! The idea is well put.

The second is famous & often quoted. If we are to be punished for the sins we have committed, at least we should be praised for our yearning for the sins we have not committed.

Have you any news of Feroze?

Your loving
Papu

Later

8/5 I have just received two letters from you together—dated 19th & 25th April. I feel happy to have this feast. Betty writes that she has sent two khadi saris for you together with some meant for Nan. Khadi is very difficult to get nowadays.

May 9. Sunday

On Friday & Saturday I wrote to Indu & Chand. As I was sending these letters yesterday morning, an unusual mail came for me—3 letters. Two from Indu and one from Betty.

These letters and their contents filled my mind all day, and even far into the night. I have seldom spent such a sleepless night. I lay awake

167. Ghalib.: If punishment there needs must be
for the sins committed,
Some appreciation, O my Lord,
for the sins in thought left undone!

for hours watching the stars and then a bit of a duststorm came. So today I feel sleepy.

There was nothing much in the letters which might be considered at all disturbing. But I suppose the life we lead here, the abnormality of it, the absence of human relations & emotions creates a kind of vacuum in a particular corner of the mind, and then small happenings or hints or records of incidents from outside fill this vacuum for a while. And inevitably one wonders where things are leading to, not only in the international and national spheres but in the narrower circle of relations & family & friends. Their minor reactions, which might otherwise pass unnoticed, assume an importance as they point to the changes taking place inside them by the impact of events and personal experiences. So it is with Indu & Chand, Nan & Betty, and others—But the others are more or less beyond reach at present.

Other people are growing & changing. What of me? Am I changing in mind or body noticeably? It is difficult to judge about oneself. I am very fit in body and I enjoy my little exercises & runs. The mind I suppose is imperceptibly changing its direction—An example—I have been reading Aurobindo Ghose's big book: *Essays on the Gita*. Much of it, the purely metaphysical part, was a little beyond me and did not interest me, except in a faint way—just to understand the argument. Yet, as a whole, the book interested me, perhaps because Aurobindo writes remarkably good & lucid prose. I doubt if I could have aroused this interest in the subject some years back. Am I going metaphysical? I do not think so. Yet there is a desire to go behind the veil of external happenings—a growing feeling that all of us, big & small, all over the world, all this war and conflict, is just puppet show. How little we influence events! We are carried by forces we do not understand and hurled hither and thither. Is there nothing behind all this—no rhyme or reason?

In my very bones I feel that this war, and all its secondary consequences, are all part of a mighty revolution in the biggest sense of the word. There is some reason & objective behind it—And yet, and yet—what an odd way of doing things, what terrible waste & misery, what hatreds, which must inevitably bear fruit in the future. Here in India the iron has gone deep down into the soul of the people.

x

x

x

x

It is fortunate that I am physically well and even mentally fairly healthy. Physical health is enormously important at any time, especially when life is abnormal. Asaf, unwell, has completely gone to pieces.

He is unhappy, troubled, incapable of doing anything, cannot even read consecutively; lies in bed most of the time. Mahmud has again been more unwell, though he is recovering. Narendra Deva has had his longest and most painful asthma fit and is growing more & more shadowy & thin. Some others keep indifferent health.

x

x

x

x

I have been carrying on my talks with the Maulana—an hour and a half daily. We are yet involved in the past, discussing what happened & how it happened—what Bapu did & said, what the W.C. did or wanted to do. This detailed review of past years has been helpful to me in many ways. Maulana's prodigious memory for details and his keen analytical mind makes the past vivid and living. Yet all this does not carry one far.

x

x

x

x

Aurobindo talks of the present, that razor's edge of time & existence which divides the past from the future, and is, and yet, instantaneously is not, as "the pure and virgin moment". I liked the phrase. The virgin moment emerging from the fog of the future in all its purity, coming in contact with us, and immediately becoming the soiled & stale past. Is it we that soil it and violate it? Or is the moment not so virgin after all for it is bound up with all the harlotry of the past?—Determinism! Cause & effect—Karma—

x

x

x

x

Betty is a little angry with me for I have approved of Chand going to America and she has not. She tells me that many people disapprove and she is constantly getting letters & 'phone calls to protest. What? To go out of the country at this critical hour? To go to far America—Escapism—a condemnation of the Indian background & culture &c. Also that young girls should not anyhow be sent away in this manner.

Probably many who so object do little or nothing themselves for that India they claim to love. They carry on with their daily lives & business and their sole service to India at the moment is to hate those whom they consider the enemies of India. Very natural to do so. But not by itself too helpful.

All this wrath at the proposal that Chand and Tara should go to the U.S., must upset the girls and make them a little bitter.

I adhere to my first opinion in favour of Chand's going. About Tara I can form no opinion as I have no sufficient data.

How inadequate we are intellectually—not that we are not very intelligent, but even our intelligence is of the womanish kind—too much governed by emotion. Religion must make it so, and that is also the Gandhian tradition.

The Bombay Chronicle has reproduced extracts from the review in the *American Current History* of my *Glimpses of World History*. A long review and a very friendly one. Full of appreciation. It cheered me up. How vain we are, or at any rate, I am!

x x x x

Later : The newspaper has a paragraph that Govt. have refused to issue passports to Chand & Tara to go to America—So that's that! Much ado about nothing.

x x x x

May 14. Friday

It appears that passports are being issued to Chand and Tara. The newspaper report was incorrect. But still nothing definite is known—or has reached me yet. There is greater difficulty in getting passages and it is almost impossible to go by air.

x x x x

I had a letter from Indu yesterday also one from Nan—both from Naini—Indu's letters interest me greatly for various reasons, but chiefly as evidence of the growth of her mind. This jail experience has made a difference to her. Fortunately she is accepting it in the right spirit and is not rebelling against it. It has hardened and matured her.

I am writing today to Indu and Betty. Betty is evidently much put out by the proposal that Chand & Tara should go to America. Not only she but her friends and particular set. My not agreeing with her in this matter has further troubled her—She is very emotional.

x x x x

For two weeks or more now Maulana and I have been having daily long rather discursive talks about our past political history—the last 23 years especially since Gandhiji came on the scene. We have argued and analysed and though sometimes disagreeing, have usually come to similar conclusions. So we arrived at the present, and then the future which is so dark. Is it worthwhile considering it now when almost every factor is changing?

x

x

x

x

Whatever happens to the world at large—and much will happen—the old political scene is dead in India. It is no good thinking in terms of the old. The Congress, as it was, is over. Nonviolence, as we had it, is over. Gandhiji's influence, so long as he lives, will always be there. But that also not in the old way. That old story is ended, and I can hardly believe that he will survive this ordeal.

Meanwhile, intrigues, opportunism and all species of knavery flourish in the political field. Must this always be so? Gandhiji, with all his faults, raised our political tone. It made politics, to a large extent at least, a gentleman's and a man's game. Now again it drifts back to sheer opportunism and trickery. *Sauve qui peut.*¹⁶⁸

x

x

x

x

Later—News has just come of Allah Bakhsh's assassination.¹⁶⁹

I am shocked and deeply moved. Sorry of course for his death for he was a brave man and, within certain limitations, he tried to play a decent and honourable part in the very difficult politics of Sind.¹⁷⁰ But the real significance of this murder must lie deeper. I do not know the facts yet. I am almost sure it can have no connection with the Hurs.¹⁷¹ It must therefore be the culmination of the Muslim League's persecution of Allah Bakhsh. The League may not have deliberately intended it, but it may well be the natural consequence of their activities.

What a bear-garden Muslim League politics are making of India! Khaliq took pride in the fact (in his recent speech at the Delhi session

168. Whoever can, let him save himself.

169. He was shot dead near Shikarpur while travelling in a *tonga*.

170. He remained outside the Muslim League and rejected its demand for Pakistan. He was forced by the Government to quit the premiership of Sind in October 1942, because he had renounced, in protest against British policy, two minor titles conferred on him before he became Prime Minister.

171. A Muslim tribe whose alleged criminal activities led to the imposition of martial law on a part of Sind on 1 June 1942 for one year.

of the League) that they had made it hot for the Congress governments even without going to jail—meaning of course their deliberate attempts to encourage communal riots, terrorisation of individuals and outrage. That is the politics we are descending to!¹⁷²

The war has let loose violence on the world. India will not escape it even though there is no invasion. Has all our labour been in vain? Are we after all a down-and-out race, incapable of rising to nationhood?

During these 23 years the Congress has made many mistakes, committed many follies, but throughout it has done its utmost, most earnestly, most devotedly, to build up national unity and to win over the Muslims especially and other minorities. Result more bitterness and separation than ever. The Muslims, as a whole, further away from the conceptions we have cherished, and the Sikhs playing a purely opportunist game.¹⁷³ Is all this a malign and inevitable fate—something inherent in our nature? Are we doomed to a miserable subjection and internecine warfare? Or is this the last and most difficult of our trials before we emerge.....

I do not know. I feel angry and despondent, and yet there is fire enough to make me eager to face the situation whatever it may be. It does not matter what the consequences are—anyway they are not in our power. But it is in our power to play a brave and honourable part in life's struggle.

May 14, 1943

Darling,

This is letter No. 9. Last week, after I had finished my letter to you and was on the point of sending it off, I received three letters in a batch, two from you and one from Betty. This was the biggest mail I had received for a long long time—well nine months to be accurate. It was quite exciting and the normal serenity of mind, which I have developed here, was disturbed, pleasantly of course. Always I seem

172. On 27 April 1943, Choudhry Khaliquzzaman said: "Muslims believe in violence and League Ministries in five provinces will see to it that Pakistan is established in effect and that the authority of the Central Government is disowned... The Hindus will prefer to rot in jail rather than settle with the Muslims."

173. The Sikhs in general did not participate in the Quit India movement as they feared that their position in the army would be weakened and some Sikh leaders began negotiations with Jinnah about this time.

to be getting your letter immediately after writing mine to you. It struck me that I had better change the day of letter writing and make it Monday. But on second thoughts I have, for the present, decided to stick to the old day.

Yesterday came yet another letter from you—your No. 6 dated May 1st. Also one from *Puphi* (Nan). Please tell her I have received it. (It is dated May 3rd).

I am glad you and other detenus in the U.P. can write letters now, even though it be once a month and not exceeding 500 words. For my part, I have arrived at a stage—is it age or increasing wisdom?—when I can adjust myself mentally and bodily to any set of circumstances that for the moment control my existence. Nevertheless letters and interviews make a very great difference to people in prison***174.

One brief letter a month is not very much and you will naturally want to write to Feroze and others. If you so prefer, you need not write to *Nani*. I shall write to her next week and give her news of you. I have not written to her so far, since I came here, because in the list of relatives to whom we were allowed to write, mother-in-law was not mentioned. But now, I understand, that a mother-in-law is considered permissible. I am not sure but I shall take my chance.

As for Yunus, you are quite right and the difficulty applies to him in an equal degree. He can only write once a month.

About Chand & Tara going to America, the wheels have been set in motion but whether ultimately they can go or not, I do not know. There appear to be all manner of difficulties. Perhaps they can overcome them. If not, they will have to adjust themselves differently. I liked the idea of their going, especially Chand's. I did so more for impersonal reasons than for personal ones. I think I have grown to think impersonally more & more. Taking everything into consideration—the pros and cons—I came to the conclusion that the pros had it. But apart from my own personal or impersonal views, the fact that Chand was anxious to go was quite enough for me. I would hate to thwart a child and come in her way. Individuals, even & perhaps more so young ones, are terribly delicate & sensitive, and I have neither the knowledge nor the confidence in myself to force my will on another in regard to his or her personal life and development. I have to be particularly careful and to check myself because I am of an aggressive nature and am always trying, consciously or unconsciously, to 'improve' others. I do this in the mass, and I suppose I shall continue to do so. But when it comes to an individual I have become more restrained.

174. Seventeen lines were blacked out by the censor.

I was amused to learn of the considerable black-outs in my letter to Chand. What on earth could I write to Chand that was capable of rubbing up the authorities the wrong way? I have not the least idea. I wish the censors would inform us of the rules or principles that they are meant to apply. Perhaps that might help a little.

When I sent you my first lot of books I took the trouble myself to black out any reference to our place of detention, as I knew this might cause trouble and delay. I did so neatly and clearly. Evidently this was not considered sufficient and fresh layers of blacking were applied. It is oddly diverting to realise what pains are taken to keep our place of detention a secret, when everybody who is at all interested has known of this. From the very beginning***¹⁷⁵

Did you see that Amery is developing a heavy kind of humour? Asked in the House of Commons whether members of Parliament could write to me through Govt. he answered: Yes, provided they were members of my family and wrote only on domestic matters!

For long now I have been hearing about your possible transfer. But a good part of the summer is over and the rainy season is approaching. There is not much point in a transfer after the summer is almost over. I hope you and the others will be taken elsewhere soon. You say you do not like the idea because you are used to your present environment. That always happens and it is astonishing how conservative human nature is and how suspicious of change. I have had that feeling so often when I was transferred from one jail to another. I was sorry to leave my companions and to have to change my way of living. But soon I got used to the new place and to new companions. The power of adaptation we have!

I have had no communication from the I.G. or anyone else about your weight. You are the first person to tell me of it. I wish you would keep me informed of it. How did you manage to gain 12 lbs. in the I.G.'s imagination?

Yes, I remember well taking you (when you were under ten) to see 'Saint Joan' in Paris. I have an idea that we have seen the original English version also.

Upton Sinclair¹⁷⁶ is very long-winded. You started at the wrong end of his trilogy¹⁷⁷ by reading *Dragon's Teeth* first. I have gone through all the three volumes. One of the reasons, perhaps, why you found

175. Four lines were blacked out by the censor.

176. (1878-1968); American novelist and social reformer.

177. *World's End* (1940), *Between Two Worlds* (1941) and *Dragon's Teeth* (1942) were the first three in the sequence of 11 novels which dealt with the political scene in Europe since 1914. *Dragon's Teeth* won the Pulitzer Prize.

Dragon's Teeth more interesting was that it dealt with a period you knew and so you were interested. The others are just before your time, and the world before we gained mental awareness of it is apt to be dull and uninteresting.

I have not read Verrier Elwin's¹⁷⁸ new book.

You mention the peepul tree in your yard. We have only one tree here—a *neem*, but little shoots of the peepul are continually coming out at odd places—how irrepressible they are! I have watched the unfolding of a new peepul leaf and been charmed and fascinated by it. The peepul, I suppose, might well be considered the typical tree of India. Of course there is the *chenar* in all its magnificence, but it is of Kashmir only; and the deodar in all its stately glory, but again it is confined to the mountains, and the *neem*, and the lovely *areca*, and so on. But the peepul is the Tree of India—and it is fixed so for ever by the Buddha legend.

What of the flowers? Obviously the lotus is the Flower of India. Equally obviously the mango is the Fruit of India. I am not sure about the animals—Is there any really typical animal?

You give me a vague description of a new bird you saw and want me to name it from here! This faith in my extensive knowledge is very touching but it has no justification. But surely you have a kind of an expert on birds with you. Nora fancies herself that way and sent me a book on Indian birds when I was in Dehra Jail.

I remember once in Almora jail catching sight of a new and lovely bird. I was excited and, having no one else to refer to, I asked a minor jail official if he knew anything about the birds there. 'Well, yes', he said, 'I know the crow!' I am not quite so bad but my bird-love is strictly limited. Do you remember when we were stopping with Horace Alexander in Birmingham or near it, how full his house was of books on birds and ornithology? These books seemed to be in every room, the hall, the landing &c.

It has suddenly struck me that you should keep some money in your jail account for emergencies — Probably you have some and you can always draw upon your bank. But then I cannot quite get rid of my habit of being a fussy old father. So I am trying to send you Rs. 50/-

***¹⁷⁹ It will take many weeks to reach you, if past experience is any guide.

178. (1902–1964); came to India in 1927 from England as a member of the Christa Seva Sangha but retired into lay life and during 1932–40, on the advice of Mahatma Gandhi, worked in tribal areas; adviser for tribal affairs in N.E.F.A., and author of several books on tribal development and welfare.

179. A few words were blacked out by the censor.

Begam Samroo—yes, most of us have heard about her though very few know much. I have read a magazine article about her and, in the course of my wanderings, I have passed Sardhana, near Meerut, which used to be her headquarters. There is, I am told (I did not see it myself), a fine Catholic church built by her with a lovely statue of the Virgin Mary. Also a picture of the Begam's, when she was young, and she was good to look at. In Delhi there are still houses which are called Begam Samroo's houses and in one of these, or in a gallery, there is another picture of hers, when she was old.

On receiving your letter I went to Maulana and asked him, for he is a treasure house of all such old stories and happenings. He told me something and gave me a book he happened to have here. This is *The History of the Reign of Shah Alum* by W. Francklin, Captain in the Hon'ble East India Company's service, published in London in 1798. Francklin was the Begam's contemporary, more or less, and was her guest for a fortnight at Sardhana. He was much impressed by her. He says that she belonged to an impoverished family of a Moghal nobleman. She married Samroo, a German adventurer in command of a body of trained troops, including foreign soldiers. (Samroo is an odd name for a German—probably it was a new name.) She became a Christian after her marriage. Samroo apparently died soon after marriage, in 1778. He had been given a large jaghir round about Sardhana and in addition to his own battalions was given command of a body of Moghal horse. He became a kind of feudatory chief under the Moghal king at Delhi.

On Samroo's death, the Begam became possessed of this principality and also functioned as the leader of the armed forces. She was a good administrator and a good captain of the forces. She built a fort and arsenals & foundries for cannon. Sardhana prospered & remained peaceful while chaos often ravaged the surrounding areas. She was loyal to the Delhi king and on several occasions saved him from destruction and collapse in battle by her personal initiative & bravery. The king gave her the title of Zebu-nnisa—the 'ornament of her sex'.

Later she got into trouble—She married for a second time and this resulted in a revolt of her troops. She married one of her European officers, again said to be a German adventurer (though his name is given as Vaissaux)—She was imprisoned by a step-son—Her new husband committed suicide. Some months or a year later, however, she gained possession of her jaghir again and remained there till a ripe old age.

This, in brief, is her story as Francklin gives it. He is enthusiastic about her: "We embrace the opportunity of paying a tribute deservedly due to the spirit, activity, and talents of this noble lady. Endowed by nature with masculine intrepidity, assisted by a judgment and foresight clear and comprehensive, Begam Samroo, during the various revolutions above detailed, was enabled to preserve her country unmolested, and her authority unimpaired."

I had not heard that she was a Kashmiri—She might well have been. Anyway she was an outstanding and interesting woman and I should like to know more about her.

In Francklin's book I found two or three other instances of women playing a notable part in battle and administration. Referring to another woman he says, "The Begam herself, who, with a gallantry and spirit not uncommon among the females of Hindustan, was accustomed to be present in action, was slain by a cannon ball."

About this time also there was the famous Ahalya Bai¹⁸⁰ of Indore.

Another passage from Francklin might interest you: Referring to the quashing of a rebellion, he says that the king set all the womenfolk of the rebels at liberty—"It being an inviolable maxim throughout Hindostan, and in general most religiously observed, to respect the honour of the harem." (Harem meaning all the women of the household, whatever their rank or condition).

Here are two couplets from Ghalib. They are in simple language and the ideas finely put.

زندگی اپنی جب اس طرح سے گزرے غالب
ہم بھی کیا یاد کریں گے کہ خدا رکھتے تھے (غالب)

The same in Hindi :

جیدگی اپنی جب اس طرح سے گزری غالب—
ہم بھی کیا یاد کریں گے کہ خدا رکھتے تھے !¹⁸¹

اُن کے دیکھے سے جو آجاق ہے منہ پر رونق
وہ سمجھتے ہیں کہ بیمار کا حال اچھا ہے (غالب)

180. (1735–1795); ruler of Holkar State with its capital at Indore, built the road from Calcutta to Varanasi, the Vishweshwara temple at Varanasi and the Vishnu temple at Gaya.

181. Ghalib : If life be so as we have had,
How adoringly shall we e'er say :
'We too had Gracious God with us!'

In Hindi :

उनके देखे से जो आ जाती है मुंह पर रीनक ।

वह समझते हैं के बीमार का हाल अच्छा है ॥¹⁸²

Last evening, a little after sunset, I saw a curious sight. The 8 or 9-day moon looked quite green. I had never seen it so. Fed up, I suppose with the goings-on in this world.

I have exceeded all bounds in this letter—I fear it is much more than 500 words! So my apologies to the censors.

Your loving
Papu

4.5.43

Darling Betty,

I received your letter of the 5th May six days ago. Today I have just received your packet containing China tea, my new and old spectacles, and two copies of Bharati's new book.¹⁸³ I have handed over one copy to Kripalani. The spectacles seem to fit. Maulana wants me to thank you for the China tea and for all the trouble you took to get it. Also for the *eau de cologne*. He is delighted with the tea.

Indu wrote to me that she had received the fruit sent by you. She was quite excited about the alphonsos, and smelt them and touched them and almost hugged them. She loves mangoes and getting good fruit and especially good mangoes, after long being deprived of them, was an exhilarating experience. I hope the fruit will continue being sent to her.

It appears that the U.P. Govt. have varied the rules applicable to detenues slightly. They can now get a newspaper and can also write one letter a month not exceeding 500 words. You are quite right

182. Ghalib : With just a glance of hers at me
A cheerful face I show;
But it makes her think
The love-sick is so much better now!

183. *The Well of the People*; a poetic drama about a Bihari widow who seeks to build a well instead of going on a pilgrimage. The idea sought to be conveyed is that India's problems cannot be judged by western standards or solved by western remedies.

about Yunus. I am surprised this did not strike me but then I did not know what the conditions of his internment were and how often he could write. Indu herself has thought of this now and suggested that he need not be asked to write to her.

About Chand and Tara, I can well understand the difficulties in the way of getting passports and passages.

It amuses me to learn that people unknown to you and the girls are writing to you to express their disapproval of their going. I would not worry much about this, unless I was myself of that opinion. It is astonishing how people constitute themselves the judges of other people's private lives and activities, without even troubling to understand those other people.

Each one, I suppose, develops some kind of a philosophy of life, and if he does not do so even in his later years, he is very superficial and his opinions are of little value. They are not opinions really but reactions, emotional and sentimental, to events and personalities. That approach is seldom a helpful one. Yet inevitably all of us are governed by it to some extent. I have tried hard to grow out of it, and to develop some poise and equilibrium which is not easily upset by life's vagaries. It is difficult for me to say how far I have succeeded.

I am an aggressive kind of person, trying often enough to force my will on others—both on the group and the individual. Nevertheless I am growing more and more doubtful about the desirability of my, or anyone else, interfering with the private life, and growth of individuals, except for the gravest reasons. In the mass, I suppose, I shall continue to interfere for I want to change many things utterly. But I do not want to come in the way of a young growing thing and thus possibly create all manner of frustrations and complexes.

Quite apart from my own views in the matter—and I am still convinced, for more reasons than I can detail to you here, that it was desirable for Chand to go to the U.S.

So do not worry, my dear, and remember that we are surrounded by overwhelming problems from which none of us can run away. The small things do not matter, this way or that. It is the big things that count and that will make the final difference. Life is difficult enough and it grows in complexity. There is a shabbiness and shallowness about it which hurts continually, if we have the misfortune to be sensitive and to have any ideals. Yet we must face it, understand it and accept it, while at the same time we have to struggle against its evil and crudity. We are all the prisoners of the myths of the past and the emotions of the present with just a little elbow room perhaps. Yet

that little might make a difference. So we hope and act and with that hope we face an unknown future.

I was delighted to get Harsha's little note. Give him my love. Ajit, he says, has been unwell. I hope he has recovered. My love to Raja and you.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

May 15, Saturday

Yesterday I wrote to Indu and this morning sent off the letter to the jail office—It was addressed to the Naini Central Prison. This afternoon I read in the papers that Nan and Indu have been released—but on their release an order was served upon them to go to Khali¹⁸⁴ and live there in a kind of internment. Not to go out of the bounds of the estate—not to see any visitor without the D.M.'s permission &c., &c.

Far from feeling any sense of elation at this, I was depressed—depressed at the presumption of any authority to impose such or any terms. I do not know what Nan's & Indu's reactions were and what they are going to do. They are reported to have gone to Anand Bhawan.

x

x

x

x

The murder of Allah Bakhsh had upset me yesterday and for a long time I lay awake in bed, my mind wandering aimlessly. I had a feeling of emptiness. I woke this morning with that feeling and it grew as the day progressed. I happened to have a talk with Asaf and although I laughed and put up a brave show I felt pretty bad inside me. My reaction to events has been different in many ways from Asaf's because we are built differently. I have, I suppose, more vitality and resolution. The same happening may lead Asaf to more compromising avenues of thought, and me to more extreme and resentful moods.

But this apart, the fact is that both of us see just blackness ahead. There is a difference though—My optimism for the world as a whole is not dead, though it is faint. It is the deadness and weakness of India that overwhelms me.

Were all our dreams then shadowy nothings? Our flaming enthusiasm smoke and hot air? Our sufferings and sacrifices mere futility? Is

184. Ranjit Pandit had his estate in Khali near Almora.

this world the happy hunting ground only for the violent, the bullies, the vulgar and the opportunists? Surely not, in the long run. But our lives are short and the short run matters to us.

The sands of life run out. The older generations which saw the beginnings of our struggle are mostly dead or passing away one by one. Men and women of my age have spent nearly all our vital years in this struggle for India's freedom, fed on hope, and now we are ageing and the old fire and energy is no more. We may continue for some more years and we may even see a free India politically. But what of the mighty changes, social and economic we planned, what of the lightning speed with which we were going to change the face of India and make her a tower of strength and progress, combining the wisdom and poise of old with the vigour and science of the new? Are we too old to undertake this burden; too old to have a real chance and opportunity? We shall carry on as we must, for there is no way of escape for our tortured minds. We are too old also to fashion our lives anew.

And the younger generation which has grown up during these twenty years? What thoughts are passing through its mind?

Disillusion and distress and a terrible emptiness. Life seems to have lost its savour and the day's routine is without meaning and value.

I have lost the desire to go out of India to any other country. I wanted to go to China again—to the U.S.A. Europe had almost dropped out of the picture in my mind and did not attract me. But now? Am I to go, when in the future I have a chance to do so, as a kind of beggar or a refugee seeking sympathy? No, no, no! It is better to remain in this country. I do not fancy myself going elsewhere as a suppliant for others' favours, or as a tourist and a casual visitor.

It is best to remain here. Remain here—how? Not as one submitting to alien and arrogant authority. That can never be—as a rebel? perhaps.

I remember Frances Gunther writing to me that on no account must I go to the U.S. as a refugee.¹⁸⁵ She was thinking of the hordes of refugees driven away from Europe by the Hitlers, Mussolinis & Francos.

x

x

x

x

My thoughts run away with me. There is no present problem for me except to exist in this Ahmadnagar Fort from day to day. And

185. In a letter dated 23 July 1942, Frances Gunther wrote to Jawaharlal: "You could not conceivably come here unless you are officially invited and it is much too late for just talk."

to do so with dignity and good humour. I laughed a little more today than I usually do, but the heart was sick and weary and the laughter shallow and with little mirth. But one must laugh!

x

x

x

x

Last year, just about this time in May, Indu and I were at Kulu with the Roerichs. The Himalayas, how soothing and permanent they are! And the deodars we saw, eight hundred years old and more—How we get excited over petty happenings and brief interludes in India's long story. Surely she will make good. She cannot go under. And if it is not for us to share in the glory, others after us will do so. Whether we are remembered or not is a small matter. Yet we have played a brave and notable part and somewhere in the subconscious mind of India the memory of this will endure.

x

x

x

x

Nora will be lonely now that Nan and Indu have left her in Naini Prison. Poor girl! But why poor? She is brave and of the stuff of heroes.

May 22, Saturday

Friday is my day for letter writing and for a dozen Fridays I have broken my normal day's routine and written to Indu, almost always, and to Nan or Betty. But yesterday I did not write, nor today. I did not know where to send my letter to Indu. No further news has appeared in the papers about them and I feel sure that if they had gone to Khali, this fact would have been mentioned. Perhaps they are still in Anand Bhawan. Certainly they are not in Naini.

Today a letter came from Nan from Naini, dated 9th May. She mentions in this, *inter alia*, that she and Indu had been informed that they had to go to Khali. They were to be released & then an externment order would be served on them requiring them to live within the Khali estate at their own expense under the surveillance of the District Magistrate. They felt that they could not obey an externment order. It was up to Govt. to send them wherever it thought fit to do so.

Presumably this answer was given by Nan & Indu to the Govt. or the jail authorities. Nevertheless they were pushed out of jail a few

days later and the externment order was served on them. Under the circumstances they may have decided to stay on in Anand Bhawan and await developments.

Meanwhile, I am in a quandary. Where to write? I shall hold on for a few days or perhaps I might write on Monday next to Anand Bhawan.

x

x

x

x

Vallabhbhai has had a relapse and for the last three days all of us have been greatly worried over it. His intestinal trouble is a serious affair and apparently not amenable to treatment, or to cure at least. An operation is the only way and it is a dangerous operation at any time—out of the question at his age and in his present condition. So all that can be done is for him to lead a careful life and carry on as long as he can. Since we came here he has had two or three minor relapses which he got over by fasting. This time it appears to be more serious and he thinks there has been a decided turn for the worse. Sometimes he has acute pains, and some pain there is almost all the time. This kind of thing obviously has dangerous possibilities and a crisis may occur at any time. Hence our anxiety. Maulana has spoken to the Superintendent and suggested that Vallabhbhai's doctor might be asked to see him, or a medical board, or better still that he should be transferred to Bombay, preferably to a hospital there.

Bhandari, the I.G., was to have come here today and Maulana was going to speak to him about Vallabhbhai—But at the last moment news came that the visit had been cancelled.

x

x

x

x

Mahmud also is giving us a good deal of anxiety. He brings up almost daily quantities of blood. The Supt. says he is sure his lungs are not affected. It is the throat. That is bad enough, especially as this bleeding process has now lasted for many months. Not too much attention was paid to it. Now, rather suddenly, the Supdt. has become worried and has confined Mahmud to bed. Obviously Mahmud is a case for a hospital. But both in his case and Vallabhbhai's there is an initial difficulty—We are supposed to be living in an unknown place although everybody knows exactly where we are kept. Anyway they are not supposed to know. So if anyone is sent out to hospital or elsewhere, this very transparent veil of mystery is torn up.

x

x

x

x

I have been feeling better lately—less depressed. Again I am turning to the garden which offers plenty of work—for the new season's sowing. For three days we have had moderate rains. This is not regular monsoon but it has effectively broken the back of the hot season. There was a magnificent rainbow—or rather two rainbows—this evening.

x x x x

I am absorbed in reading the Webbs' *Soviet Communism*—A wonderful book.

x x x x

Amery has said in the House of Commons that there are nearly 50000 people in jail in India on account of the 'August disturbances'—Of them over 8000 detenus.

x x x x

The papers today announced the death of Moti Kathju¹⁸⁶ in Burma. He survived the African campaign and died in a raid in Burma.

May 23, 1943

Darling,

This is my letter No. 10. It is being written two days later than usual. I have been in a quandary and have not escaped from it yet. Where are you likely to be and to what address must I send my letters?

The very day my last letter went off to you I saw in the newspapers that you and *Puphi* had been released from Naini and later some kind of an order had been served upon you both calling upon you to proceed to Khali and live there under the surveillance of the District Magistrate. I wondered immediately what the outcome of this would be. I was by no means sure of the developments and so I decided to wait for further news before I wrote to you again.

186. A cousin of Jawaharlal; he worked for the *Pioneer*, Lucknow, before joining the Indian Army. He was a member of Wingate's expedition and was killed in May 1943 in a Japanese ambush in Burma.

Yesterday I received a letter from *Puphi* from Naini Prison dated May 9th. This was mainly concerned with Chand's & Tara's going to America. There were a few lines, however, to say, that you too had been informed of coming events—that you were going to be released and served with an externment or internment order—whatever it is—to live at Khali. She added that both of you felt that you could not obey an externment order. It was up to the Government to send you wherever they thought fit.

In spite of this you were both released and the order was apparently served. So what has happened and where are you now? I was inclined to wait till I heard from you but now I have decided to write. It is foolish waiting. Probably you are in Anand Bhawan. If not, I suppose some arrangements have been made for the forwarding of letters.

Your departure from Naini must have left Nora all by herself. Or has she been sent elsewhere?

I suppose Chand and Tara have sailed, though I do not know. I had a letter from Chand a week ago to say that they had been told to keep ready to leave at a moment's notice.

If you happen to be in Anand Bhawan could you send me Shridharani's¹⁸⁷ *My India, My America* (or some such silly title). It must be in my room. It is a fattish book. Also one or two books by Dewey,¹⁸⁸ the American professor & philosopher—Also in my room.

The monsoon is still some way off but we have had some rain—the छोटी बरसात¹⁸⁹ I suppose. This has brought down the temperature and I am again busy with my gardening. This will keep me well occupied for two or three weeks. Did you get some small gardening tools from Pocha's?

I wonder if you can trace the two letters I wrote to you in September and October last. Not that there is anything important or worthwhile in them but I am interested in their fate.

Here are two more Urdu couplets. The first is by Mir.¹⁹⁰ The second by Ghalib.

187. Krishnalal Shridharani (1911–1960); arrested for participation in Dandi March, A.I.C.C. member, 1933; from 1934 till 1947 resided in the United States; journalist in Delhi after independence.

188. John Dewey (1859–1952); philosopher and educationist, whose writings include *School and Society*, *Experimental Logic*, *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, *Quest for Certainty* and *Problems of Men*.

189. The pre-monsoon showers.

190. Mir Taqi Mir (1724–1810).

آلٹی ہو گئیں سب تدبیریں کچھ نہ دوا نے کام کیا
(میر) دیکھا اس بیماری دل نے آخر کام تمام کیا

In Hindi :

उल्टी पड़ गई सब तदवीरें, कुछ न दवा ने काम किया ।
देखा इस बीमारी-ए-दिल ने आखिर काम तमाम किया ॥¹⁹¹

رنج مے خوگر هوا انسان تو مٹ جانا هے رنج
(غالب) مشکلیں اتنی پڑیں مجھ پر کہ آساں ہو گئیں

In Hindi :

رنज से खूगर हो इनसां, तो मिट जाता है रंज ।
मुश्किलें इतनी पड़ीं मुझ पर के आसां हो गईं ॥¹⁹²

खूगर होना means to get accustomed to something. आदी हो जाना
Taba Tabai is short in both places — तब तबई—

Your question about the pronunciation of 'what' put me on enquiry and I was a little surprised at the result. I find I say 'wot' in normal casual conversation. But if I am reading out something rather slowly or saying something with deliberation, I am inclined to say 'what'. So, in a way, I please both the schools of pronunciation. But my general tendency is all for 'wot'.

I read yesterday about Moti Kathju's death somewhere in the jungles of Burma. Having survived the African campaign for nearly two years, he was to meet his end in a skirmish against the Japanese.

You grow philosophical in your letters and introspective. Perhaps it is inevitable and circumstances force us to be so. Yet do not grow up too soon! I took a long time over the business. Anyway it is definitely an advantage to be intensely interested and curious about the world and its inhabitants — That is not introspection. But most of the inhabitants are a lousy lot! I am interested in humanity, both in the

191. Mir : All the measures and plans have proven false;
No medicine did me good;
See, this disease of the heart,
At length, put an end to me!

192. Ghalib : Pain afflicts no more
when it comes to be a part of life;
So many vicissitudes of fortune I have seen
that easy they come on me!

mass and in individuals, but have often found relief from the burden of too much humanity in turning to animals and plants and the like.

I am immersed at present in a careful reading of the 1200 pages of Beatrice & Sydney Webbs' *Soviet Communism*. It is an astonishing and a wonderful book. Somebody walked away with my old copy long ago. So I am reading *Puphi's* copy and—tell her—marking it profusely.

I am writing today to Amma also. I do not quite know where to address her. Pyare Katju¹⁹³ is I believe now the Director of Industries in Jaipur State. Chand used to be in Lahore, presumably in the Imperial Bank there. She intended going to Lahore. So I shall send my letter there. She was to have had an eye operation a month or two ago. I do not know the result of it. You had better write to her also.

Love,

Your loving
Papu

I have been vaccinated today!

Tuesday May 25

I wrote to Indu after all on Sunday last, sending my letter on Monday. Addressed to Anand Bhawan. Also wrote to Amma¹⁹⁴ to Lahore.

Today's papers contained the news that Nan and Indu had informed the U.P. Govt. that they were unable to obey the internment order. This must have been done ten days [ago]. Apparently they are still in Anand Bhawan. I was elated to learn of this but there was an element of anxiety as it was stated that Indu was suffering from influenza. Nothing much normally, but decidedly not good for Indu.

Chand and Tara have sailed for America by sea, probably a week ago.

x

x

x

x

For two or three days I have hardly done any reading. Partly I have been occupied by gardening — New seeds have been sown in anticipation of the rainy season. This business is likely to occupy me a good deal for some time.

193. Pyarelal Katju, husband of one of Kamala Nehru's sisters.

194. Jawaharlal wrote 12 letters to the mother of Kamala Nehru during this term of imprisonment. Copies are not available in J.N. Papers in N.M.M.L.

Also I have been having long talks with Asaf and Mahmud—and of course my daily talks with Maulana continue. It really is astonishing how Asaf has deteriorated. He looks terribly aged and quite down and out. I cannot understand how any person can go to pieces like this. The worst of it is that he realises it and admits it.

x

x

x

x

Bhandari, the I.G., came today. seemed to be preoccupied and in a hurry. He left a sense of dissatisfaction behind and doubt as to whether he had fully grasped how serious was the condition of Vallabhbhai and Mahmud.

Wednesday May 26th

Letter from Betty today. Chand and Tara sailed for America on May 15th.

Raja ill. Has been sent to hospital and there is a possibility of an operation for gall-bladder. He has lost 20 pounds in weight since he went to prison this time in August last. This is a lot for a thin person like him. Bhandari yesterday might well have said something about him to me as he was coming from Poona and must have known all about it. But he did not say a word.

May 28, 1943

Darling,

This is my letter to you No. 11. It is just fifteen days today since I received the last letter from you and that was dated May 1st—May Day. During this fortnight much seems to have happened of which I have received the vaguest information. Indeed I know nothing except what the newspapers have given, and that is little enough. More than ever I have waited for your letter.

The papers say you are in hospital and are suffering from influenza. Influenza is usually a trivial affair but not for you and I hate this idea of your having to go to hospital again. You have already spent long months and years in hospitals and sanatoria and I had hoped that you had rid yourself of them for good. Of course it is not the hospital

that upsets me. It was as well that you went there for you will be better looked after there than at home. But the idea of your not being well distresses me. Perhaps it is not so surprising after 9 months of the 'Female Barrack' in Naini Jail.

And now news comes that *Puphi* has gone back to Naini. All roads, so far as we are concerned, lead there, and that is our journey's end! I suppose you would have been there also for a second time but for the fact that you are actually in hospital. Perhaps a little later you will also be escorted there. Well, well—it is well.

So again I live in uncertainty about you and what the immediate future will bring. The calm and monotony of jail life is broken into by these incursions of uncertainty and anxiety. I wonder often why this kind of thing does not happen to me rather than to others. I am strong and tough and can bear a good deal. But that others who are not so strong of body should have to put up with such burdens is an unpleasant thought for me. And yet after all it is the mind that counts and that overcomes the weakness of the body. And I am happy to know that wherever you might be, in hospital or jail, your mind will be at peace and you will be able to find in its recesses a measure of contentment. And you can dream, as you have been doing, of wonderful snow-covered mountains, rose-coloured and radiant in the light of the morning sun.

Allahabad seems to be particularly hot at present and for another month it will continue to be so. Here some rain has brought the temperature down a little. In anticipation of the coming monsoon I am busying myself with the garden. This occupation keeps my hands and mind busy when sometimes it is a little difficult to concentrate on reading. Apart from this, I believe it satisfies some inner craving for work and activity. So I am filling up wooden boxes and pots with seeds and treating them as nurseries for the little seedlings to grow up. Some of them shot up with amazing rapidity, others linger and take their time. Within two or three weeks I shall begin transplanting these seedlings and putting them in beds.

Betty writes that Raja is ill and is also in hospital. There appears to be a possibility of an operation for gall-bladder or some such thing—He has lost in weight a great deal and he could ill afford to do so. Poor Betty is naturally upset. So many people seem to be ill, and often seriously so.

I wonder if you have received all the packets of books I sent you to Naini. In all I sent four parcels, including the first big one. The fifth one has been ready for dispatch but I do not quite know where to send it. So I shall hold on to it for some days. Besides you are

not likely to require it in hospital and you can draw upon books from Anand Bhawan.

I give you two more couplets from Ghalib. The first one has a certain appropriateness. It is really in the Sufi tradition¹⁹⁵ and deals with the inner meaning of life.

ہم وہاں ہیں جہاں سے ہم کو بھی
کچھ ہماری خبر نہیں آتی
(غالب)

In Hindi :

हम वहां हैं जहां से हम को भी ।
कुछ हमारी खबर नहीं आती ॥¹⁹⁶

چلتا ہوں تھوڑی دور ہر اک تیز رو کے ساتھ
پہچانتا نہیں ہوں ابھی راہبر کو میں
(غالب)

In Hindi :

चलता हूं थोड़ी देर हर एक तेज रौ के साथ ।
पहचानता नहीं हूं अभी राहबर को मैं ॥¹⁹⁷

तेज रौ —means literally 'fast goer'

राहबर —one who shows the way—the leader

I shall hold on to this letter till tomorrow morning. Perhaps a letter from you might come then.

May 29

No letter has come and so this goes off —

All my love,

Your loving
Papu

195. Islamic reformist and mystical movement of late tenth and early eleventh centuries.

196. Ghalib : We are there
Where of ourselves
Even we do not know!

197. Ghalib : With every traveller moving fast
A little distance I do go;
Who is to be the real guide
I cannot yet say!

May 31st Monday

I wrote to Indu on Friday-Saturday although no letter from her had come and no other news. I sent the letter to Anand Bhawan. I did not write any other letters.

I am wrong in saying that no other news of Indu had come as the papers had announced previously that she had been removed to the hospital. No news since then. Nan was arrested on the 26th — and taken to Naini.

Today I had a letter from Indu from Anand Bhawan dated 22/23rd May and one from Nan dated 26th—the day of her re-arrest.

These letters gave me disquieting news of ill health of both of them. Nan is very unwell and even on the day of her last release from Naini, a fortnight or so ago, she was so weak that she could hardly walk unaided. And Indu has got a very bad attack of influenza, pain in the chest &c. The poor girl could hardly write to me because of this and subsequently, as Nan's letter showed, this grew. What is her condition? How is she now? Is this trouble leading to pleurisy again? I am troubled and my mind wanders.

What a miserable world this is of wholly unnecessary pain and suffering. If the girls had been sent to a better climate (in jail) possibly they would have improved or at any rate carried on and not deteriorated in health. If they had been normally discharged and no fresh order served on them, they would immediately have gone to Khali. They would not have stayed in Allahabad for an unnecessary day and Khali was the only place to go to. But as it happened they were ordered to go to Khali and live there under the surveillance of the D.M., who I think is the scoundrel who used to function in Sultanpur. Inevitably they refused. Because of the Govt. order they could not go to this very place they intended going and where now the Govt. ordered them to go. The Govt. knew that in Khali they would have to lead a solitary and isolated life without any order. But they insisted on humiliating them and the Congress. This was not going to be tolerated.

And now Nan is in Naini again with no chance of being sent to a better climate, and Indu is in hospital, liable to be re-arrested at any moment and transferred to Naini! And the temperature of Allahabad, so Indu wrote, was 112°F in the shade and she lay gasping for breath. That was bad enough. A few days later, the papers announced, the temperature rose to 117°F. Another month before the monsoon. What a hell it must be! The agony piles up.

Indu managed to pay a visit to Fyzabad to see Feroze in jail there. Found him thinner. He is kept isolated, why I do not know. Several lines in Indu's letters blacked out.

x x x x

Here Mahmud's condition has deteriorated. He has had fever and is very weak. Evidently the vaccination has roused up dormant maladies. Vallabbhbai's condition, though not so acute now, is even more serious. Both of them are obvious hospital cases.

To add to our light-heartedness Narendra Deva has had another attack of asthma! He lies groaning throughout the night, and Mahmud groans and moans in his room. Mahmud's room changed. He has been given a small room which used to be Mahtab's.

So life is cheerful. I spend a good bit of my time in nursing & looking after Mahmud.

x x x x

In the outside world strange things have happened. Gandhiji has tried to send a letter to Jinnah; the Govt. of India have refused to forward it. And Jinnah has come out with a statement which reaches high watermark in meanness, and the lowest trickery of language.¹⁹⁸ Anyway this has had one good result, or so I suppose. It exposes Jinnah more than anything he has so far done; it gives an intimate glimpse into his mind, and the sight is very unpleasant, opportunism raised to the *nth* degree, pomposity and filthy language, abuse, absence of a single constructive idea, a capacity for what is considered 'clever' politics, vulgarity, incapacity for any action apart from shouting, total incomprehension of the events & forces that are shaping the world, &c., &c.

One would have thought that only a bloody fool could be taken in by all this. Yet he carries it off! And that is the wonder. Was Hitler's analysis correct—that the masses are just fools who can be made

198. On 4 May 1943, responding to a public invitation of 24 April from Jinnah to write to him if he were anxious for a settlement with the League and that if he did so, the Government would not dare to stop such a letter, Mahatma Gandhi wrote to Jinnah suggesting a meeting. But the Government informed both Mahatma Gandhi and Jinnah that the letter had not been forwarded as it could not "give facilities for political correspondence to a person detained for promoting an illegal mass movement." Jinnah commented on 28 May 1943: "This letter of Mr. Gandhi can only be construed as a move on his part to embroil the Muslim League to come into clash with the British Government solely for the purpose of helping his release, so that he could be free to do what he pleases thereafter."

to do anything if your lie is big enough? Certainly Jinnah has been an apt pupil of Hitler's.

x

x

x

x

Last night I had a long two hour-talk with Asaf—Pretty useless I suppose. We cannot convince each other. We move in different mental planes; we are moved by different urges; we have different sets of values.

June 1, 1943

Darling One,

Your letter of May 22/23 reached me yesterday. Also a later letter from Puphi who gave me some more news. In spite of all my tall talk and long practice in keeping cool and collected in untoward circumstances, I have felt worried and distressed about your health. It is aggravating not to be able to get frequent and rapid news of you—to have to wait for a fortnight or so for stale reports. I watch the figures for temperature in various places in the papers. My eye runs down to Allahabad and steadily, and sometimes with an amazing jump, the figure mounts up. 112, 113—bad enough and, for you, most difficult to bear—and then a jump to 117°F! That is beyond the limit even for Allahabad—I do not remember a higher temperature than 116 at the most there. And the rains there are still far off—It is a good test for you.

I am sending a few more books to you—as follows:

- 1 Adams : *The Epic of America*
- 2 Zimmern : *The Greek Commonwealth*
- 3 Sinclair Lewis : *Main Street*
- 4 *Modern Plays* (Everyman's Library)
- 5 *Sculpture Inspired by Kalidasa*

*The Epic of America*¹⁹⁹ is a good book and worth reading if you are in the proper mood. It is the best short survey of America during the past 200 years or so. Zimmern may not interest you unless the subject appeals to you. For my part I am more and more interested in tracing similarities and contacts between ancient India and ancient Greece. This book does not go far in this direction except unconsciously for

199. Written by James Truslow Adams in 1931, it is an unconventional history of America pointing out how Americans have developed but how far from their "promised land of democracy" they still are.

India is not in the picture at all—But all manner of traditions, habits & customs crop up which remind one of India.

You must have read all, or nearly all, the plays given in Everyman's selection. Possibly you have seen some. Yet they are good and you might care to re-read some of them.

During this month of May that is just over I thought often of the Kulu Valley where you and I went a year ago. It was a cooling and refreshing thought. Somehow the Himalayas have always a soothing effect on me—even the thought of them helps. That is not merely because I love mountains and glaciers and the deodar and so many other things that are there, but also because of their calm imperturbability which smiles at my own fitful nature. They remain, howsoever excited we may get. They are always there to welcome us whenever we can find our way to them. They represent to me the old strength and the spirit of India, rather remote but ever present, enduring. I suppose one day you and I will go there again, not for a few days or a week but for an unhurried wandering, away from the burden of this world for a while.

Here is a verse by Iqbal—

لازم ہے دل کے پاس رہے پاسبان عقل
لیکن کبھی کبھی اسے تنہا بھی چھوڑ دے
(اقبال)

In Hindi:

लाजिम है दिल के पास रहे पासबाने अकल ।
लेकिन कभी कभी उसे तन्हा भी छोड़ दे ॥²⁰⁰

पासबान means guardian. Iqbal in *Hindustan Hamara* calls the Himalayas the पासबान of Hindustan. The verse given above is fairly simple—He says that it is essential that the mind be the guardian and watch-dog of the heart, but, and that is the whole force of the couplet, but sometimes at least it should leave the heart alone and not be always interfering.

Here is a line by Jurat²⁰¹ (जुरत) which appeals to me greatly although there is nothing very special in it. There is a spirit of happy vagabondage

200. Iqbal: Your heart by reason
must needs ever be guided;
Yet at times let it revel, as it may!

201. Qalandar Bakhsh Jurat (d. 1810).

in it, something in Lao-tse's²⁰² tradition, a care-freeness, of indulging in life's work and burden and pleasure and yet not being bound up by them. It may apply to life itself or to any particular incident. It is written, I believe, from some Sufi standpoint, but it is really much more than that—For the Sufis usually just run away from life and go on repeating that it is empty and hollow, an illusion—माया But here there is no such passivity and negation but rather a happy meeting with life and all it brings but always a sense of detachment also, of passing on with a light heart to the next occurrence or stage in the journey. This is a long enough introduction to just a line or two! The word टुक means a moment or small period of time.

نک دیکھ لیا، دل شاد کیا، خوش کام ہوئے اور چل نکلے (جرات)

जुरत : टुक देख लिया, दिल शाद किया, खुश काम हुए और चल निकले ! ²⁰³

I am sorry you found Feroze none too well when you saw him. Some lines in your letter have been blacked out. I suppose they referred to Feroze.

I have something to do with illness here—not my own, for I flourish, but other people's—a fair part of my time is being spent in looking after them, though I am not a good nurse—

This is my letter No. 12 to you—

Love to you, my dear,

Your loving
Papu

I understand that the Government of Bombay, in search of a better and pleasanter climate, has shifted to Poona. So letters addressed to me had better be sent now C/o The Secretary to Government, Home Department, Poona. This will probably save delay.

202. Lao-tse, (c b. 604 B.C.), Chinese philosopher, reputedly the founder of Taoism.

203. Jurat : For a moment I saw,
My heart made glad,
I enjoyed myself
And I took my way!

June 3rd—Thursday

The last three days have been unusual for me—I have done little except nursing Mahmud. His condition became suddenly rather serious; his temperature went on mounting and was somewhere between 103 & 104°F. It was obvious that all this was not just a reaction to the vaccination. Possibly the vaccination had roused up latent disease; indeed much of this is not latent, it is obvious enough.

Mahmud grew terribly weak and slightly light-headed. I spent a good deal of time with him, day and night. Yesterday he took a turn for the better and the improvement has been kept up. It seems that he is out of the wood but he will take a long time to get back even his normal strength.

Yesterday morning I spoke to the Supt. with some vigour and, I fear, harshness. My anger was of course directed against the Govt. and not against the Supt.—I told him that it was scandalous that serious hospital cases, like Mahmud's & Vallabhbai's, should be treated casually here. If we had been in any ordinary prison they would have been sent immediately to hospital. Here, with the supposed veil of secrecy about our whereabouts, this was not easy.

I asked him to convey our views to the I.G. or Govt.

x

x

x

x

No further news about Indu or Nan. But Allahabad continues to enjoy a temperature of 116°F or 117°F in the shade—What a time of the year for Indu & Nan to be there—one in hospital and the other in prison. I am greatly worried.

I wrote to Indu day before yesterday June 1st. I think I shall write again tomorrow—I am allowed two letters a week and I am sending both to Indu.

x

x

x

x

The monsoon seems to have come here in earnest. Not with a flourish but rather quietly. Nevertheless it appears to be the real thing. The air has changed.

June 5, 1943

Darling Indu,

I have had no further news of you. Yet there is no reason, except my own anxiety and desire, why I should have expected another letter within a week of the last. One gets into bad habits—telegrams, telephone, swift messages and communications, and even long periods in prison do not help one much to get out of these ways. In prison life has not kept pace with the changes of modern science and we live almost as we might have lived a hundred years ago or more. The order of things is static, unchanging, almost stagnant except for the incursions of thought, but thought without action fades away. Yet it is this order of things that is continually changing in the world outside and thought itself has lagged behind and cannot keep pace with it. It is amazing how people continue to think in the old ways and try to preserve them though everything about them shouts out at them that it is different. When will people be swifter in their thought and their adaptation to an ever-changing order of things?

I hope you have been better and have got rid of your trouble. This month of June with its fierce heat in Allahabad frightens me a little. Yet even that will pass and perhaps in another three weeks or so you might have the rains. Here the monsoon appears to have set in and it is cooler.

I sent you a few days ago some books, among them Zimmern's *Greek Commonwealth*.²⁰⁴ In this book there is one chapter at least that is worth reading. This gives the funeral oration delivered by Pericles. It is a famous speech and at times strongly reminiscent of Lincoln's speech on a like occasion at Gettysburg.

You asked me once about Yunus's book.²⁰⁵ Betty wrote to me long ago that this had come out and she had received a copy. I have not seen it yet.

I have been surprised to learn from the papers that Chand and Tara had reached Australia on their way to America. I was under the impression that their ship was going *via* South Africa. They took just a fortnight from Bombay to some port in Australia, which is not bad going.

204. Politics and economics in fifth century Athens are dealt with in this book.

205. *Frontier Speaks* (1942); the book was about the Pathans and the Khudai Khidmatgar movement led by Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan.

Here is an appropriate verse from Ghalib:

خزاں کیا، فصل گل کہتے ہیں کس کو، کوئی موسم ہو
(غالب) وہی ہم ہیں، قفس ہے اور ماتم بال و پر کا ہے

In Hindi: ख़ज़ां क्या, फ़स्ले गुल कहते हैं किसको, कोई मौसम हो ।
वही हम हैं, क़फ़स है और मातम बाल ओ पर का है ॥²⁰⁶

ख़ज़ां is more or less the autumn. Apparently autumn is a delightful season in Iran, unlike India (except in the north and in the mountains). ख़ज़ां is often referred to in Persian poetry, and hence in Urdu also, for Urdu has taken *en bloc* its imagery and ideas from Persian. It talks of the birds, rivers, mountains, trees, flowers, seasons of Iran, wholly or almost wholly ignoring the fact that these things are to be found in India also. This gives Urdu poetry a certain artificial look.

बाल in the second line is not the ordinary Hindustani word meaning hair. It is the Persian word meaning wing (of a bird) बाज़ू (चिड़िया का)

The couplet is supposed to be the lament of a bird in a cage (क़फ़स means a cage पिंजरा) presumably addressed to a friendly bird outside who has come to remind it that autumn has come. It may well be repeated by many an imprisoned bird today.

The idea is that a bird in a cage has its wings clipped and hence is continually shedding them. बाल ओ पर का गिरना is often used as an idiom in the case of anyone being suppressed and deprived of his or her beauty or accomplishments or anything else.

I have had no news of Raja from Betty for a long while.

If you write to Feroze send him my love.

Get well, my dear, and keep a stout and cheerful heart.

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No: 13.

Just as I was putting the finishing touches to this letter, I received your letter of May 29th. I am very glad you are better and out of hospital. But this cough and temperature business is no good.

I sent Rs. 50/- to the Naini Jail for you. Did you get it? As Hari has been marrying off various people in his family, I think

206. Ghalib: Spring, or Autumn
Any season it may be;
With my mournings for my wings to soar
To this self-same narrow cage
Confined, as ever, I am!

some kind of a wedding gift might be given to him or the boys and girls concerned. If you are out when you get this letter you might fix this up. If not then do not mind.

I am sorry about Lachhminie's²⁰⁷ grand-daughter. Such help as can be given for her treatment or food might be arranged.

I shall ask Betty to write to Walsh about *Fortune* &c. As for *Asia* I have not seen a number since I came here and I am supposed to be a contributing editor. Few American magazines reach India nowadays and some do not come at all. However I shall make an effort.

I read Fischer's speech²⁰⁸—It was good & remarkably lucid. He is certainly head and shoulders above the ordinary and average American or English journalist.

Regarding newspapers, we are supplied with two: *The Times of India* & *The Bombay Chronicle*. Some of our colleagues subscribe to some other provincial papers—*The Hindu* of Madras, the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* of Calcutta, *The Tribune* of Lahore. I glance through all of them. I think *The Hindu* is far the best daily in India.

I had not heard, till you wrote to me, about Shama's²⁰⁹ marriage.

Papu

8-6-43

Darling Betty,

I have been expecting further news about Raja. Is he still in hospital? And, have they (the doctors) decided whether to operate or not? Was he sent to the Civil Hospital in Poona? For him to lose 20 pounds is not good. He had nothing to spare. It would make little difference to

207. Mother of a sweeper in Anand Bhawan.

208. Louis Fischer said in May 1943 that India's demand for freedom and the insistence by the Congress on the establishment of a national government during the war as a preliminary to the grant of full self-government were in keeping with the war aims of the Allies. As the British Government in India had handled the situation tactlessly the American Government should intervene and end the political deadlock, for "a satisfied India would be a formidable force to counter the Japanese aggression."

209. Sham Kumari Zutshi, wife of Prakash Chopra, a chartered accountant in New Delhi.

me I suppose. Indeed I have lost 12 lbs. since I came and am all the better for it. Please keep me informed about Raja.

Moti's death is sad—it must be a special blow to you for you were old friends. I had not met him for some years and even previously for a considerable time, I just saw him from a distance, usually at Golagunj. Most of my memories of him date back to the time when he was a kid. It is odd, and yet that kind of thing is frequently happening, that he should have survived years of dangerous campaigning in North Africa and then met his death in a raid in Burma.

How is your book getting on? Has it gone to the publishers? My love to the children and send it to Raja. Keep cheerful and do not worry much.

Love,

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

June 12, 1943

Darling Indu,

As I was sending off my last letter to you a week ago I received your letter of the 29th May. I added a postscript to my letter. A few days later came your letter of the 31st May—which is your 9th I think.

Reading your letter I was struck by the fact that a good deal of it dealt with people's deaths, illnesses and marriages—the changes you had discovered during your period outside prison. Only births were not mentioned, though no doubt the normal number of babies appeared at their appointed hours. The world goes on along its age-old way, but for those in prison it seems to stop and a dull routine with no change or highlights seems to freeze life into immobility. So when we go out the most ordinary things surprise us and become significant. What we had long taken for granted has the novelty of fresh experience. And so, curiously enough, the very deprivation of normal life is followed by an intenser appreciation of it, a richer sense of true values.

I am not surprised, therefore, at your reaction on coming out of Naint, your joy at seeing the curve of the Jumna and the *gulumohurs*, your appreciation of home comforts and the like. I think these changes help us greatly in sensing life in its many aspects and prevent us from that awful malaise of the modern world—staleness and boredom and a generally empty feeling.

I am very sorry to learn of Kesho's and Rafi Ahmad's illness. I wonder how many others among our friends are ill and deteriorating in body under the stress and strain of events. Nora, I understand, is also unwell.

I had not heard previously of Shama's marriage.

I was amused to learn of what the I.G. has been saying about your health.

I am intrigued by the large-scale blacking-out of my letter to you. Why this should be so passes my comprehension for I do not write to you about any of the matters that are *defendu* or *verboden*; at any rate I do not think so. But I cannot compress my mind entirely or mould it to the shape of the censor's.

We expected the rains ten days ago. Indeed there was a change in the air and a new breeze brought cooling messages. But so far the monsoon has held off. It is somewhat cooler certainly. Compared to Allahabad it is far pleasanter. I do not think our temperature has gone over 107°F at any time. I used to sleep in the open but latterly, for fear of the rain, I sleep in the verandah.

About the American magazines I have written to Betty and asked her to convey my message to my publishers. As a matter of fact I had told Walsh last year to continue to send them even without any further instructions from me. They come very irregularly and some do not come at all. Latterly I have been receiving some odd numbers of foreign periodicals, forwarded from Allahabad. Probably I shall send them back to you.

I think you have done well to have your hair cut and have 'the service bob'. I am sure it must suit you.

Here is a hackneyed and copy-book maxims type of quatrain (*rubai رباعی*). There is nothing very special in it but as it is typical of Urdu verse I am sending it to you. It is by Anis²¹⁰ (अनीस) :

دنیا بھی عجب سرائے فانی دیکھی ہر چیز یہاں کی آتی جانی دیکھی
جو آئے نہ جائے وہ بڑھا پا دیکھا جو جا کے نہ آئے وہ جوانی دیکھی (انیس)

210. Babar Ali Anis (1802-1874).

In Hindi:

ख़्बाई दुनिया भी अजब सराय फ़ानी देखी
हर चीज़ यहां की आनी जानी देखी
जो आ के न जाए, वह बुढ़ापा देखा
जो जा के न आए, वह जवानी देखी ।²¹¹ अनीस

फ़ानी means something that ends—सरायफ़ानी—a kind of passing show.
Here is a rather pretty conceit in simple colloquial language. It is
by Ghalib—क़ासिद means messenger.

قاصد کے آتے آتے خط اک اور لکھ رکھوں
میں جانتا ہوں جو وہ لکھیں گے جواب میں
(غالب)

In Hindi:

क़ासिद के आते आते ख़त इक और लिख रखूं ।
मैं जानता हूं जो वह लिखेंगे जवाब में ॥²¹²

I wonder where this will find you—in Anand Bhawan or in Naini.
There is something to be said for living in complete uncertainty—not
knowing what the next day or the next hour will bring. It prevents us
from getting down in the ruts and adds a spice to life.

This is my letter No. 14 to you.

The notepaper I am writing on is hand-made in Travancore. It was
sent to me by Betty. Which reminds me that I have not heard from
Betty for a long time—about 3 weeks. Nor have I had any news from
Nan since she went back to Naini.

Love

Your loving
Papu

211. Anis: A strange inn is this world; .
Everything that comes here goes, goes away
But, when old age creeps in, it never goes away;
While youth, when once it flees, never comes again!

212. Ghalib: A letter, one more, I should pen
While the messenger's coming back;
What, if ever, she may write
Well I know!

June 14. Monday

Two letters have just come—from Indu and Betty. Indu still in Anand Bhawan. It appears that she was on the point of going off to Naini Prison. The police had come and she was packed up—even the thermos being filled. And then she was asked if she had any objection to being examined by the Civil Surgeon. She said she had none. The C.S. came & together with Vatsala Samant²¹³ examined her. As a result of this the police departed without Indu. The C.S. has sent some kind of a report to Govt.—and the question of Indu's going back to Naini remains an open one. Perhaps the warrant for her arrest may be withdrawn on the ground of her weak health.

She is not fit & well. Yet she has largely got over her influenza. My fear that she might suffer a relapse of pleurisy has happily proved wrong. She is stronger evidently than she used to be and has more power of resistance.

She writes long delightful letters and is much concerned with the changes she is discovering in herself. From the closed house that was herself, she is looking out more and more and finding a new interest & excitement in the world. That certainly is a good development. I would love to be with her now and watch her grow and possibly help her occasionally—And yet perhaps it is as well that she is by herself and has to find her way without extraneous influence.

Betty has just finished her book of personal reminiscences. Strange how widespread is the desire to find self-expression in writing about oneself. Typical of the age I suppose. Nan has also been writing her autobiography.²¹⁴ Both of them have the knack of writing and so are likely to produce worthwhile stuff, provided they do not overdo it and do not become too self-centred and self-conscious in the process. I suppose people write autobiographies because that is the one subject about which they know something. The difficulty is that they know too much!

Raja is taking some treatment in hospital.

x

x

x

x

The two letters—from Indu & Betty—pleased me. In jail, I have often noticed, that letters produce a definite reaction—much more than

213. Medical superintendent of the Kamala Nehru Hospital, Allahabad, 1942-72.

214. *Prison Days* was an account of the author's life in jail from August 1942 to June 1943. It was published in 1944.

outside. I seldom feel neutral about them. There is either a sense of satisfaction and contentment or one of distress, acute distress at times. It is not always easy to spot the reason for this but the feeling is there. Starved and locked-up emotions respond quickly to even vague stimuli.

x x x x

Mahmud continues to be bed-ridden though he is a little better & is apparently progressing. I look after his food &c. and go to him frequently. Sometimes a word or phrase he says irritates me. Odd how differently we are constituted. His very affection for me becomes a nuisance. He is so terribly dependent and I dislike dependence and weakness.

x x x x

For a month or more I have been living rather 'loosely', if I may put it this way. Previously there was a strict timetable—solid reading of a heavy kind of book, Urdu, Hindi &c. This took up a good part of the day and I had to adhere to the timetable in order to keep up to the mark. Mahmud's illness rather upset this. Urdu went, so also Hindi, and even the solid reading became rather spasmodic. I could not concentrate on it as I used to and frequently I would find an excuse for doing something else—going to see the plants & seedlings or fussing about the flower beds.

x x x x

After the first light rains, the monsoon walked or flew away and we had hot sunny days. Yesterday, however, it came in earnest and we have had more or less continuous rains for the last twenty-four hours or more.

x x x x

Later

Read in today's papers that Nan released from Naini C.P. and the order & warrant of arrest on Indu withdrawn. Presumably this was on June 12th. I am glad.

June 19, 1943

Darling Indu,

So your period of uncertainty is over for the present at least and you have moved away from the terrific heat of Allahabad. Your letter of the 7th June reached me on the 14th. Two or three hours later I read in the papers about *Puphi's* release from Naini and the cancellation of the order served on you. Yesterday I received your letter of June 12th but even this had nothing in it about the developments which took place presumably that evening. The same mail brought me a letter from *Puphi* dated 13th June. This gave a little later information.

I notice that you have gone to Bombay on the way to Panchgani. I think you have done well. All the places you mentioned in your letter—Khali, Bhowali, Kashmir &c., were not indicated. Panchgani is I suppose as good a place for rest and recuperation as any, though just at present it must be all rain and no sun. Normally people seldom go to these Western Ghat hill stations during the monsoon because of the abundance of the rain. But this does not really matter and I am sure you will prosper there.

I do not know where you are—in Bombay or Panchgani. Anyway this letter will go to Bombay C/o *Puphi*. I should like you to have yourself thoroughly examined (medically) in Bombay. Not that I am at all anxious about your present condition. Indeed I am rather pleased at the way you have stood the heat (plus jail) of Allahabad after so many years spent in a cold climate. This shows how much stronger you are now and how you have developed greater power of resistance. Still, it is as well to know one's body thoroughly and so a full overhaul is indicated. Besides your cough is persisting and this must be attended to. If you have already gone to Panchgani, you can fix up with the doctors when you come to Bombay next.

You will remember that you can draw on Bachhraj for any money you may require for your expenditure.

I am anxious about *Puphi's* (Nan's) health. It is obvious that there is something radically wrong with it. I am glad she has gone to Mussoorie for some rest. But she has to go to Bombay also for full medical examination and treatment. Unwell for some time past, the stay in Naini Prison has knocked her up.

I am a little worried about that 4th parcel of books I sent not reaching you. There is at least one book in it which I would hate to lose. Will you write to the Superintendent, Naini Prison, and ask him about it—also about the Rs. 50/- sent to you care of him? The books were

sent by me from here on May 6th, the money on May 13th—both of course through the Govt. of Bombay. Among the books is Voltaire's: *The Best of All Possible Worlds*—a present of mine to Mummy. There were 6 books, some reports and papers from America, and 4 numbers of the *Reader's Digest*.

A long time ago I managed to drop my tortoise-shell cigarette case on a stone floor. A small chip came off it near the hinge and since then I have been unable to use it. It is a pity to leave it as it is. So I am sending it to Betty for repairs. Please tell her about it.

Betty has conveyed a message from Hindustan Hamara publishers to me. They want to publish my *Autobiography* here as it is not otherwise available. I know nothing about these publishers. If they are efficient and business-like (qualities seldom found in publishers here), I have personally no objection. But they cannot publish the book without coming to terms with and getting the express authority of my English publishers in London, who hold the copyright for India also. The American publishers need not be referred to for India as their area is different. So if they like, the Hindustan Hamara people can communicate with John Lane (The Bodley Head) now owned largely by Allen and Unwin. Also they must communicate with my London literary agent, V. K. Krishna Menon, whose permission is desirable. Will you give this message to Betty? I shall write to her myself next week.

I do not know what facilities there are for writing to friends in England. I wish you would write to Krishna and find out how he is. Give him my love—also to Agatha.

Do you remember Dr. Mahmud's two daughters? Sarvar and Hamidah. Sarvar got married, I think, three years ago when I was in Kashmir. Hamidah is still unmarried. Mummy used to take a great deal of interest in them. She arranged to get them admitted to the convent school in Allahabad and they used to come to our house on holidays. I should like you to get into touch with Mahmud's family. They are rather a helpless lot especially in Mahmud's absence, and they will be cheered by letters from you. If possible, later you can see them. Sarvar has been rather ill recently after giving birth to a baby. I suggested she might be sent to the K.N.M. Hospital in Allahabad. The address for letters is C/o Dr. Syed Mahmud, Huque Manzil, Chapra, B.N.W.R. (Behar). Mahmud's two grown-up sons are Said and Habib. One of them has been unwell too.

Here is something by Atish²¹⁵ (आतिश).

215. Haider Ali Ansh (d. 1846).

نہ کچھ شوخی چلی باد صبا کی
 بگڑنے میں بھی زلف اس کی بنا کی

ابھی اس راہ سے کوئی گیا ہے
 کہہ دیتی ہے شوخی نقش پا کی
 (آتش)

In Hindi:

न कुछ शोखी चली बादे सबा की ।
 बिगड़ने में भी जुल्फ उसकी बना की ॥

अभी इस राह से कोई गया है ।
 कहे देती है शोखी नक्शे पा की ॥²¹⁶

Both these couplets are independent of each other. In Urdu verse each couplet stands by itself and is complete. There are other forms of verse where the idea runs on.

शोखी is a good word—It means grace with an element of mischief in it. Coquetry is perhaps a near approach.

बाद means breeze हवा—बादे सबा is the morning breeze —नक्श is an impression—नक्शे पा is the impression left by the foot—footprint. जुल्फ means curly hair at the sides.

This is a typical conceit of Urdu verse—also Persian. The first couplet refers to the morning wind playing mischievously with the hair of the beloved. But even when disarranged it remained attractively arranged. The second couplet: the poet finds out that the beloved has passed that way from the footprint with all its combined grace and mischief and coquetry.

I have just learnt that the Rs. 50/- I sent you were not sent after all as you had been released. This money will come to me now. So you need not inquire about it. But inquire about the books from Naini.

We are having plenty of rain.

Your loving
 Papu

This is my letter No. 15.

216. Atish : As it played with her lock,
 The breeze did not prevail;
 All the better was it done
 When it was unmade!

The lively footprint this, so does say:
 It was she, it was she
 who has gone this way!

22-6-43

Darling Betty,

I received your letter of the 11th June some days ago.

It is good news that you have finished writing your book. I am eager to see it but, as you say, this must wait till it is published. Amiya Chakravarti is a good person to advise you. I have always found it difficult to revise a book I have written. Having finished it, I am reluctant to go back to it. My *Glimpses of World History* was never revised after the first writing and I saw it again in print. Even then I could not bring myself to read it through and it was only some years later, when a second edition was coming out, that I revised it carefully and pruned it down a bit. But this is a bad habit which I do not wish you to follow. It has led to many errors and loose sentences creeping into my writings. As a matter of fact I could not easily help this, situated as I was.

Of course you have all my good wishes for your book. It is odd how the success of a book ultimately depends on certain immaterial and insubstantial factors which one cannot easily measure. Good writing and presentation are of course important, the content is even more important, but over and above there comes a certain sincerity in writing, combined with restraint, which colours a book and makes it liked. So good luck to you!

We are having a fair amount of rain now and I am busy with our little garden.

Love to Raja and the children and to you.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

June 26, 1943

Darling,

I have your letter of the 18th June from Bombay—No. 12. I am glad you have got out of the heat of Allahabad. Probably you are in Panchgani now but I am sending this letter to Bombay. You will let me know your Panchgani address.

I was glad to see Vatsala Samant's report. It is satisfactory. I am not worried about your health, for worry is caused when something

that ought to be and can be done is not done. I am sure you are not guilty of such omission and are quite capable of looking after yourself. But naturally I do not wish to take any chances and your having to stay in Naini Prison in the hot weather was a very unusual occurrence for you which did cause anxiety. I repeated myself often enough in my letters to you, well knowing at the back of my mind that this was not necessary. Still a father is apt to be fussy about such matters and you must not mind. As I wrote to you, I am rather pleased at the way you have gone through this difficult period and this leads me to think that you have really laid the foundations of future good health. This is just the time when continuing care in essential matters secures these foundations. I am sure that within a year or so you will be healthy enough for a normal life in every way, without having to think of your body. A healthy person does not think of the body; it is taken for granted. But a healthy person also develops habits which keep one fit. Most people, I find, have the most evil habits in small matters—food, rest &c.—and then they complain of ailments, as if they had not invited these ailments by their own misbehaviour.

I should like to see Dr. Bharucha's²¹⁷ report also.

Your reaction to Bombay after Naini is interesting but natural. I have seldom felt life's contrasts so much as when I went to London (with you) in November 1935. I had spent nearly four years in prison and the two or three months in Badenweiler had been quiet and anxious ones. The change to a great and wealthy city, with all its pomp and luxury, its strength and ceaseless activity, its social and intellectual life, had a remarkable effect upon me. I felt as if I was in a dream, or was I waking from a dream? Which was real and which was unreal? Dream-like almost I went through my early engagements, and I remember that at the first short speech I made at a social gathering this contrast and sense of unreality coloured my words. Gradually, but soon enough, I adapted myself to the new environment and felt at home in it.

To a lesser extent that has been a frequent experience with me. Indeed long years in prison leave their permanent imprint on the mind and face, and nothing that can happen subsequently can rub it off. Ghost-like, that shadow self of prison accompanies one through life's journey, often adding a deeper significance to the passing moment, sometimes, like a sentinel, barring the way to a particular feeling or sensation. It creates a self-made prison of the mind out of which

217. Pheroze B. Bharucha, a well-known doctor of Bombay.

escape is harder than from any other prison. Perhaps that is in keeping with the state of affairs in the world today.

You write that your mind works in a peculiar way and that you rarely find anyone who will sympathise or understand you. True enough for all of us who think, and yet, often enough, the fault lies with us rather than with others. Each one of us has, or ought to have, his ivory tower of thought, to which he retires from time to time. But no one can live in that ivory tower for any length of time without drifting away from the current of life and losing touch with those vital and human impulses which mean so much for us. Living so, we wither and shrink and become querulous and dissatisfied with others, and consequently with life itself. That is not good enough. Almost every person, who thinks, imagines that he or she is a peculiar person, apart from the rest. And so of course every individual is. Then there is the feeling of lack of sympathy and understanding. True enough, again, for we are all, deep down, strangers to each other and even to ourselves. But the doors and windows of sympathy and understanding do not open out to us of themselves: They await our initiative. The more we give to others, the more do others give to us. Like most things in life, they come to us when we are not seeking them deliberately but thinking of something else.

I should like you to send me Tendulkar's snapshots—both the old ones taken in August and the new ones. I suppose they will get through. About *Asia* I am surprised to learn that both *Puphi* and you have been, or were, receiving copies. Betty wrote to me that it had long ceased to come. Of course I subscribe to it, or rather it is on the list I sent to Walsh over a year ago asking him to subscribe on my behalf. If you have any copies of it for the last year I should like you to send them.

You mention that Madan Bhai is in Lucknow. Does that mean he is in prison there? Where is Upadhyaya?

I am sorry about Yunus's book. After all the trouble you and others took, it is a pity it is so sloppy and full of mistakes.

I suggested to you that you might write to Krishna; whether your letter will reach him or not I do not know. There is a book I have long wanted to get and have so far failed. You might ask him to send it. It is J.D. Bernal's *The Social Function of Science*²¹⁸ (Routledge

218. The book by J.D. Bernal, the well-known British physicist, is a survey of the place of science in human life. It covers the history of its development and its future possibilities and suggests solutions of social problems with the aid of science.

12/6). It is a fairly old book and was published some years ago. Also he might send one or two other books that he thinks might interest me and can reach me. The chances of his sending these books are strictly limited, but there is no harm in trying.

Here is a *rubai* (quatrain) by Hali.²¹⁹ There is an English word in it—'reformer'. Such words in Urdu always are difficult to make out as one does not expect them. This kind of verse dealing with social reforms and the influence of western life on India was specially popularised by Akbar,²²⁰ the poet of Allahabad (अकबर इलाहाबादी) he is called). Akbar's son married a European woman and so Akbar was personally interested and he reacted strongly against this intrusion of the west, as he called it. These verses were topical enough a generation ago. Now they have dated. The following quotation is, however, not by Akbar but by another well-known Urdu poet, Hali.

دھونے کی ہے اے ریفارمر جا باکری
 دھو شوق سے کپڑے کو پر اتنا نہ رگڑ
 دہا رہے کپڑے پہ نہ کپڑا باقی
 (حالی)

In Hindi : हाली-रुबाई

धोने की है ऐ रीफार्मर जा बाक्री
 कपड़े पे है जब तलक के धब्बा बाक्री
 धो शौक से कपड़े को, पर इतना न रगड़
 धब्बा रहे कपड़े पे न कपड़ा बाक्री।²²¹

The language is simple enough. जा means जगह
 Give my love to Psyche —

Love from your loving
 Papu

I have just received a letter from *Puphi* (Nan) in which she tells me—that Ranjit has had a bad heart attack and has been transferred to Lucknow for treatment.

219. Altaf Hussain Hali of Panipat (1837–1914).

220. Syed Akbar Husain (1846–1921).

221. Hali : O ye reformer, clean the garment
 So long as the stain is there;
 Clean it as ye may;
 Pray, do not rub it so
 That it wears away!

July 2nd Friday

Last night, just about 12 midnight, I seemed to have groaned and howled with particular vigour. Pattabhi heard the noises and was alarmed. He thought it was Mahmud and then Asaf and next Vallabhbbhai. He got up and investigated and found out that I was the cause. I woke up as he was passing my bed.

This nightly moaning is becoming a nuisance. Evidently it is an old habit for Kamala used to tell me about it. But it was rare. In prison or when I am particularly disturbed or agitated it grows & becomes louder and more painful to hear. I remember, nearly ten years ago in Dehra jail, my shouting in my sleep and two jail warders rushing to find out what had happened. Last year, during the Cripps' talks, when I was staying with Ratan in Delhi, Rajan dashed in one night because she heard me moaning loudly.²²²

Here I have often done it. Last night it was much worse and I shouted continuously for some minutes. Pattabhi says it sounded as if someone was being murdered! Horrible thought! What have I got in my sub-conscious self, or wherever it is, which comes out in sleep when the restraints of wakeful consciousness are absent?

It is not stomach trouble or indigestion for I am fit enough in that respect. It should not be even mental distress for I have not been feeling particularly distressed. Indeed I have been rather cheerful lately. And yet perhaps the distress or frustration is there somewhere.

Almost always this is accompanied by or follows a nightmare. The nightmare is not vivid and I forget it soon after waking. But just on waking I remember it. Usually it has to do with struggle and conflict and a certain inability on my part to reach the person or thing which is troubling me. I then shout out either for help or as a warning to someone.

This peep into some inner depths within me troubles me. What kind of life do I lead under the conscious covering of self?

x

x

x

x

Indu is well and is in Bombay. Likely to go to Poona with Psyche. I am happy that Indu has gone through this hot weather with success in spite of all the disabilities of jail.

Nan not well. In Mussoorie slowly recuperating—Ranjit has had a fierce heart attack and has been transferred to Lucknow, presumably

222. Ratan is R.K. Nehru and Rajan is his wife.

for treatment. But he is kept in jail there. Nan was allowed to see him and he had to be brought on a stretcher to the jail office. Terribly weak and thin.

x x x x

Raja better in Yeravda.

No news yet of Chand & Tara reaching the U.S. They were due there about the 20th June.

x x x x

Mahmud here is somewhat better and moves about a little. More cheerful. Not so Asaf Ali, who continues to be wrapped up in gloom.

Vallabhbhai's condition continues unsatisfactory but he carries on. He has been examined in the local hospital, X-rayed &c., and then left to himself. Both he and Mahmud are serious cases requiring expert treatment which obviously they cannot get here.

x x x x

The end of the eleventh month draws near and soon the first year in Ahmadnagar Fort will be over—My mind dwells frequently on Bapu and what he might do when this year ends. The vague rumour we heard four months ago or more that he was determined to fast—probably a fast to death—has not been confirmed or even referred to in the papers. Still it sticks in the mind and my instinct tells me that some such thing will happen. Five weeks more—and then?

x x x x

After a long interval Mahmud and I have begun our Urdu and Hindi lessons again. We do them in a leisurely fashion—more so than previously.

July 3, 1943

Darling,

I have your letter of the 23rd June. I wonder if you are still in Bombay. Anyway this letter must go there for want of a better address.

I am glad you had your foot attended to. How did you manage to hurt it? A mere corn should not give so much trouble. Apart from any special treatment, a good way with corns is to wear nothing which presses on them—*chappals* for instance do not press.

I am sorry about Mac.²²³ Of course you should not come in the way of Psyche's normal programme. If you go to Poona, who will go with you? Psyche? And where will you stay? Where is Nargis nowadays?

Kashmir is so far away. Otherwise it is the obvious place for rest and a holiday—I cannot make out why people, who have the choice, go to other places. You need not rule out Kashmir entirely, but for the present, it does seem advisable to pitch your tent at some nearer and more accessible place. To be cut off more or less from events and people by going to Kashmir is itself an unattractive prospect.

You are right. You should do some visiting later. You have not seen *Nani* since your marriage—have you? A visit to her is long overdue.

I cannot give you any new address for Krishna. I do not think I have had a letter from him during the last three years nearly. You can try the old address in Strand.

No, I have not been spinning here. I did not have my charkha for some months but even when it came I did not take to it. This was partly due to the pain in my arm. I had an idea that spinning aggravated it, or at least kept it going. Also, I was doing so much manual work in connection with gardening that no further manual labour seemed called for. Now that you have demanded yarn from me and my right arm is almost normal, I am thinking of going back to the charkha. Perhaps I may start our second year here with spinning. Only five weeks remain to it. I have some slivers (पूनी) but not much. You might ask Psyche to have a bundle of good slivers sent to me.

But surely you will not expect me to supply you with yarn enough for your requirements. That is beyond my capacity, especially as I do not propose to spin for more than, at most, an hour a day. This does not carry one very far. Some of my colleagues here, better spinners than I am, have produced quite a lot. One of them has got about a dozen dhotis and saris &c. made out of the yarn he has spun here during the last 10 months.

Some of my old yarn—not much—was lying in my dressing room (left-hand top or bottom drawer of the dressing table) and I asked Betty, when she was going to Allahabad, to get hold of it and give it to Psyche or the G.S.S.²²⁴ I wonder if this was done.

In some of the old English papers I have seen an advertisement of a new book by Aldous Huxley. It is called: *The Art of Seeing* (Chatto & Windus 7/-). Huxley's books are always interesting in some

223. Maneckji Sorabji Captain, husband of Goshiben Captain (Psyche).

224. Gandhi Seva Sena, an organisation which promoted the wearing of khadi and produced hand-spun materials.

way or other but this particular book I am interested in because of the subject. Huxley lost his sight, or nearly so. He shows in this book how he recovered it by some psychological process, possibly some exercises. My sight is good enough but I am interested in bodily health. For the moment, however, it is Mahmud's eye-trouble that has led me to this book. One of his eyes does not function at all and the other is seldom in good condition. So if it is possible to get this book, I shall be glad. I realise that this is no easy matter.

I should also like to have some time or other—no hurry—my book: *The Unity of India*. If it is possible to buy a new copy, I would prefer this. But the book was not available at the bookshops more than a year ago and there is little chance of fresh supplies having come in. With great difficulty a friend of mine managed to get a copy for me from a Calcutta bookshop, paying Rs. 30/- for it. Some profiteering! If a new copy is not available, get my copy from Allahabad, when you can easily manage this. I repeat, do not put yourself out for it.

Here is Urdu verse of a somewhat different type. It is called a *qata* कता that is four lines with a running thought, unlike the couplets which stand by themselves. It is by Wazir of Lucknow²²⁵ (वज़ीर लखनवी) and is a gentle remonstrance and taunt at the Almighty for punishing him, although He is called the All-Merciful &c. There are some words in it which you probably do not know, but you should know them, as they are in frequent use.

نه کر عوض مرے جرم و گناہ بے حد کا الہی تجکو غفور الرحیم کہتے ہیں
کہیں کہیں نہ عدو دیکھ کر مجھے محتاج یہ آسکے بندے ہیں جسکو کریم کہتے ہیں
(وزیر لکھنوی)

In Hindi: वज़ीर लखनवी—

न कर एवज मेरे जुमों गुनाह बेहद का
इलाही! तुज को गफ़ूर उल रहीम कहते हैं।
कहीं कहें न उदू देख कर मुझे मोहताज
यह उसके बंदे हैं जिसको करीम कहते हैं!²²⁶

एवज means बदला; गफ़ूर=माफ करने वाला=who pardons; रहीम=रहम करने वाला=one who pities=the Merciful; उदू=दुश्मन=enemy; रुसवा=तकलीफ में=in pain; करीम=करम करने वाला=बख्श ने वाला=the Giver, also one who forgives.

225. Khwaja Mohammed Wazir (d. 1852).

226. Wazir Lucknavi: Pray, weigh me not for my countless sins, O Lord,
Thou art The Most Compassionate Pardoners!
Seeing me helpless, the enemies may not deride and say
'Look, here is he who serves The Most Benevolent One!'

Some words, like *Ilahi* إلهي, are written in a curious way. These are the relics of Arabic in Urdu.

You must have made a fair collection of Urdu verses in your notebook by this time.

This is my letter No. 17—We are having plenty of rain.

Love,

Your loving
Papu

Later: I have just received your letter (type-written) of June 27th. So I am sending this to Poona. Give my love to Psyche & Noorie.²²⁷ I have received your two pictures.

July 4, Sunday

I wrote to Indu yesterday. As often happens, I received her letter just after. She was going to Poona with Psyche.

Chand & Tara have reached New York—quick work. They took barely forty days—probably less—from Bombay to New York *via* Australia. Considering war conditions, convoys &c. this was good.

Indu sent me a long message from Mridu—almost a letter from her. I was glad to have it. It was typical of her. What an extraordinarily brave girl she is—one of the bravest persons I know. She is in Arthur Road Prison, Bombay, with Maniben. Both of them were transferred from Yervada, probably to isolate them from the others, as they were continually making complaints—about others' troubles.

x x x x

I was surprised and delighted to find a bulbul's nest in the verandah opposite, near the jailer's quarters. It is beautifully made, like a dainty basket and fixed ingeniously in a creeper—quite low and easily accessible.

x x x x

Mahmud is doing well. A remarkable discovery has been that the blood he has been spitting out regularly for the last ten months is probably coming out of the gums. All manner of guesses were made—

227. Nargis Captain.

He was X-rayed. His throat was twice examined by specialists. A dentist saw his teeth. Ultimately it was decided that the blood must come from the throat. Some days ago I asked Mahinud to use my tooth-powder ('Aksir Dandan') in a particular way in order to strengthen the gums. I was not thinking of his blood-trouble at the time. A week later he told me that from the very day he started using this tooth-powder he had produced no blood at all, and this had been a daily occurrence previously. His immunity continues.

x x x x

Asaf still in the dumps. I fear it is something much worse.

6-7-43

Darling Betty,

Yesterday I received a parcel of *langra* mangoes which you or Indu must have sent. They are good and it is a delight to eat a *langra* again.

I do not envy you your revision of your book, though this has to be done. It is almost as bad as proof-reading. There is no surer way of losing all pleasure in a book than to have to read it repeatedly in proofs.

You will notice that I am writing on the hand-made paper which Chinni sent me. It is good stuff but the envelopes might have been a shade bigger.

My love to Raja and you and the children.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

July 10, 1943

Darling Indu,

During the last week I have had two letters from you, both from Poona. The last one was No. 16. I have received the two books you have sent me; also the parcel of *langra* mangoes. These mangoes were in good condition, except for a few. It was delightful to have a good *langra* again. Some weeks ago I received the parcel of *Alphonsos* which Betty sent.

The eye-lotion has also come. I was somewhat surprised at it. I wanted Murine but having forgotten the name I asked Betty to find out from Rajan, who had originally introduced me to Murine in Dehra jail. I suppose this was not available and so Rajan sent some prescription. Now I have got the name from your letter but that will not help much.

I liked your pictures. In last year's snap you look about 15. You look a little older this year and the chin and jaws are firmer. Perhaps this means growth and development both bodily and mental. But pictures depend so much on clothes and accidental circumstances. They capture a particular mood and fix it. In the course of the same day a person may look older and wiser or otherwise. *Puphi* (Nan) wrote to me that the 'service bob' suited you very well and you looked very boyish in it.

I should like to have your other snapshot which you mention. Also, if you can manage it, Mummy's pictures taken at Panchgani. When I came here I had a few odd snaps in my pocket book, Mummy's and yours. Now that you have added to them, I have stuck some of them up in some kind of frames and my room looks much gayer.

I am sending you to Panchgani some books which I no longer need. I want to get rid of such books so as not to keep on piling them here. After another two or three weeks I shall probably want to send some more. Where shall I send them? The old foreign periodicals are arriving in batches. Some of them are more than a year old but there is often something of interest in them and I am glad you sent them. I am returning them from time to time to Betty. Or do you want to have them?

The following books are being sent to you:

- 1 Macneile Dixon: *The Human Situation*
- 2 Mackenzie: *Myths of China & Japan*—(Psyche's)
- 3 Alva: *Men & Supermen of Hindustan*
- 4 Mark Twain: *Tom Sawyer*
- 5 —Do— : *Huckleberry Finn*
- 6 Tendulkar: *30 Months in Russia*
- 7 Mir Amman: *Bagh-o-Bahar*—باغ و بهار

and 2 copies of the *Reader's Digest*, Nov. & Dec. 1942.

One of these books, as marked, is Psyche's. Please give it to her. Have you read the Mark Twain²²⁸ books? They are interesting and

228. Pen name of Samuel Langhorne Clemens (1835-1910); American author and humorist. His work offers a picture of the mid-19th century Mississippi frontier civilization.

make one understand to some extent the background in America in the early days. Both the books I am sending are Tara's copies.

The Urdu book is one of the earliest prose works in Urdu, written about 140 years ago. It was written especially at the suggestion of the officers of the East India Co. to enable young factors from England to learn Urdu. It is simply written. The stories it contains are of course older.

I have received a letter from Amma from Lahore. Will you write to her and tell her that I have got it and that I shall write to her again later.

I was sorry to learn of the tragic circumstances of Madan's father's death. We have been particularly cut off from news of the U.P. The newspapers we get are from other parts and seldom give U.P. news. I do not yet know, except from what you have written, which of our friends or relatives are in prison there.

Where is Upadhyaya's family and Chandra Singh's wife? Are they in Allahabad still or have they gone to their respective homes in the mountains?

I got Mridu's long message which you conveyed to me and I was glad to have news of her. She is a very brave girl, one of the most courageous persons I know.

Poor Bebee has a way of meeting accidents. The number of them she has had, especially with cars. It is very foolish of her to continue to rush about in spite of her ill health. She is not going to solve the food problem this way. That is pretty desperate now and individual efforts cannot take one far. Still it must be difficult to see all this terrible suffering and sit idle.

Have vegetables been grown in any quantity in Anand Bhawan? Eighteen months ago or more I impressed Ladli Bhai with this and suggested that there should be widespread sowing of vegetable seeds. He was not keen and said we would not require all this. Of course not, but then there were our servants, our friends, our neighbours and indeed so many other people who would need them. I do not think he quite appreciated my argument; still he promised to make a beginning.

Our garden is taking shape now for the new season and, within a month, it should be in flowers. This is not a good season for flowers. But we have laid the foundation for a good display in the early winter.

One of our occupations just at present is to watch the new generation of birds come out of their nests. Our rooms are full of sparrows' nests; our verandah has many a *maina's* nest and an occasional swallow-nest. The other day we discovered a bulbul's nest right in the heart of a creeper, quite low down and accessible. It was a lovely piece of

weaving, cunningly resting on and partly hung from the thin strands of the creeper. Two baby bulbuls peeped out of it and the rest seemed much too small for them. Between the bulbul parents and the *mainas* nearby there was continuous war, but fortunately no damage was done.

The first two days or so, when the nestlings come out of their nests, are a time of trial for them and their parents. The solitary *neem* tree we have got in a corner of our yard contains a colony of kites, and they swoop down on the fledgelings and sometimes succeed in carrying them away, but not if the parents are anywhere about. It is extraordinary how the small *maina* attacks a kite fiercely and pursues it, if the kite ventures to come near its young. I do not know how many of the fledgelings have been carried off by the kites. Yesterday we actually saw one such tragedy—it was a *maina* babe. The bulbuls have, I think, escaped.

The bulbul in India seems to be a much more prosaic bird than its cousins in Europe or in Iran—the nightingales, *rossignols*, *nachtigalls* &c. In Iran it is called the *hazar-dastan*. It does not seem to indulge in much singing here. The bird which is continually attracting attention by its cries is the koel. I suppose they have their nests round about somewhere. The parrots also must have a home nearby as they fly over us frequently. The wagtail used to visit us regularly but it has not been in evidence for two or three months.

Do not trouble yourself about my health or weight. I am in excellent condition—physically and mentally. My weight now is 133 lbs. which is just right. According to some rather silly theories of calculating weight with reference to height and age, I believe it should be about 140 or so. As a matter of fact I always gain about 5 lbs. on release from jail owing to better food, etc.

The quotation you have given from an old article is singularly true and appropriate—much more so for those who go to prison than the writer probably imagined. We do become ghost-like for a while at least, and if the periods in prison have been long, some of this ghostly character clings throughout life. One cannot get out completely from that environment and it follows us wherever we may go.

What a lovely idea is contained in the three lines of the 'Seed Shop' poem!²²⁹

229. Here in a quiet and dusty room they lie,
Faded as crumbled stones or shifting sands,
Forlorn as ashes, shrivelled, scentless, dry—
Meadows and gardens running through my hand...
(‘The Seed Shop’ by Muriel Stuart.)

I have just been reading a review of a new Chinese book translated by Arthur Waley—or rather the book is an old one but the translation is new. It is a novel of which the central character is an old friend Hiuen-tsang. It is called: *Monkey*²³⁰ by Wu Ch'en translated by Arthur Waley (Allen & Unwin 12/6). I do not suppose you can easily get it. But note it down and get it when you can.

Yes, tell Noorie that I often think of Chand Bibi.²³¹ Inevitably so. She has not appeared in my dreams when I am asleep but my waking dreams have often been full of her.

This letter is long enough already. So I shall give you only a single couplet of Ghalib:

رو میں ہے رخس عمر کہاں دیکھیے تھے
 نے ہاتھ باگ پر ہے نہ پا ہے رکاب میں
 (غالب)

In Hindi:

री में है रक्षो उम्र कहाँ देखिये थमे
 ने हाथ बाग पर है न पा है रिकाब में।²³²

रक्ष=घोड़ा; पा=पैर

Your letter No. 17 dt. 6/7 has just come—I had expected it from Panchgani but it is from Poona. Still I am sending this to Panchgani—This is my No. 18.

Love

Your loving
 Papu

July 14th Wednesday

Rumours for many days that Bapu had written to the Viceroy suggesting that he was prepared to withdraw or suspend the C.D. part of

230. This is a partial translation by the English orientalist, Arthur Waley (1889-1966), of a Chinese novel of the Ming Dynasty, *Hsi Yu Chi (Journey to the West)* by Wu Ching-en (1500-1580). It describes the priest, Hiuen-tsang, during his pilgrimage to India in search of scriptures, accompanied by a monkey and other creatures.

231. Wife of Ali Adil Shah, the fifth Sultan of Bijapur; she defended Ahmadnagar Fort in 1593 and in 1596 against the Mughals.

232. Ghalib: The steed of life
 Spirited does it go;
 Where does it stop, who can know?
 Neither our feet in the stirrups are
 Nor the reins do we hold!

August Resolution &c.²³³ Even this vague rumour upset me for a while, as it did Maulana. After all that has happened and the gross insult offered by the Viceroy to Bapu and the Congress, my whole being revolted against any approach on our behalf to Linlithgow. But the rumour was vague and unverified. Even if Bapu had written to Linlithgow, we did not know what he had written. Why should I judge him and why should I worry? Anyway we could do little at this stage and from here.

So I adapted myself to this seeming new situation with its possible developments. But a dull pain remained. I hesitated to speak on this subject to Maulana although I go to him daily and we discuss current topics and other matters. To add to my discomfort some jocular remarks about our impending release were made by a few of our companions. Cheeta Khan (as we call the Superintendent) was excited.

Yet I reasoned with myself. What was Bapu likely to do? Knowing him as I do, I could not help coming to the conclusion that he might well have written again. That is his way, especially on the eve of a great step. Was he not contemplating a fast, probably a fast to death? It would be natural for him to make one last effort, without weakening on any principle or fundamental matter. Even politically considered, this might strengthen his and our position. And the fast coming after the breakdown of that effort would be even more effective.

What was the rumour? That he was prepared to suspend the C.D. That left the main body of the August Resolution intact. Linlithgow had demanded a withdrawal of the whole resolution and assurances for the future. Will it be possible for him & his Govt. to agree to this relatively minor change? The probability was that he would not.

x

x

x

x

The Maulana suddenly referred to this matter in his talks with me day before yesterday. He asked me why I had avoided the subject? He had been completely upset by the news and even more so by the jubilant attitude of some of our colleagues and their references to it in conversations with the Supt. I suggested that he might call all of us together and speak on the subject so that all unseemly exhibitions might be avoided in the future. He agreed. How shallow & superficial some of

233. To counter these rumours, Mahatma Gandhi asked the Government, in a letter dated 16 July 1943, to contradict these reports as he had neither the desire nor the authority to withdraw the resolution. The request was turned down.

us were, he said. We cannot control events, but, at the least, we might control our feelings and their unseemly exhibition.

x

x

x

x

We met yesterday afternoon, all of us, and Maulana addressed us. He spoke well, moderately and considerably and yet explicitly enough. Of course everyone agreed—There was some talk.

It was as well that this meeting took place for otherwise today's news might have led to further exhibition.

It is reported by *The Hindu* fairly definitely that Gandhiji has withdrawn the August Resolution—²³⁴ apparently *in toto*—and the matter has been referred to the British Cabinet. If this is so, it is a cruel and heart-breaking surrender. All the brave words he said last year were empty verbiage, or so they have subsequently proved. We have not got enough nerve.

But I must not make up my mind without knowing the facts. The only thing that is clear is that Bapu has written and made some kind of an offer. What this is, we must not guess. Nor is it at all fair to condemn him.....

Yet can one forget his sudden and amazing changes? The Rajkot affair²³⁵—the inner voice—&c. I feel very sad.

Could he not have waited for another three months till Linlithgow went?²³⁶ Nothing much was likely to happen then under Wavell²³⁷ but still it was worthwhile waiting. With all his very great qualities he has proved a poor and weak leader, uncertain and changing his mind frequently. How many times he has changed during these last four years since the war began? It is very very sad, this deterioration of a very

234. *The Hindu* report of 12 July 1943 stated: "According to reliable reports Gandhiji in his letter to the Viceroy has unconditionally withdrawn the A.I.C.C. resolution of August 8, 1942. Gandhiji, it is believed, has requested His Excellency to favour him with a reply before August 8 this year. In view of the importance of the matter, the Viceroy is believed to have communicated the terms of the letter to the British Cabinet and will await instructions before sending the reply to Gandhiji."

235. The Maharaja of Rajkot offered his people certain reforms and then went back on his offer. Mahatma Gandhi undertook a fast to death but broke it without any satisfactory assurance from the Rajkot Government.

236. The appointment of Lord Wavell to succeed Linlithgow was announced in early July 1943. He took over on 20 October.

237. Archibald Percival Wavell, (1883-1950); Commander-in-Chief of the Middle East, 1939-41; Commander-in-Chief for India, 1941-43; Viceroy of India, 1943-47; author of *Allenby: A Study in Greatness* (1940) and *Allenby in Egypt* (1944).

great man. The greatness remains in many ways, but the sagacity and intuitive doing of the right thing are no longer in evidence.

x x x x

Life is influenced so much by its personal contacts and aspects. I would have been much more upset by the rumours & reports that come to us if I had not felt more content and happier for entirely different reasons. The chief of these reasons is Indu. Her letters have been regular and frequent. She has been well and she appears to be maturing and developing into a fine young woman. Her childish prejudices and immaturity are fading away, or so I imagine. There is depth in her and strength of mind and purpose.

But what influences me most is a new relationship that is developing between us. We are closer to each other than ever before; almost we might be friends rather than father and daughter. From my side this desire and feeling were always there but they were not particularly obvious on her side in the past. Now she reaches out to me and this sensation is a tremendous joy and comfort to me.

x x x x

Bundles of American papers and magazines have come—old ones chiefly. There are frequent references to me, complimentary as a rule, and of course my vanity is tickled.

Have I any big role to play in the future? Vanity says yes. And reason says no: You are too squeamish, idealistic, proud, unbending and aloof, and in any event totally unfitted for the political game. You do not represent India or the average Indian; you cannot walk in step with the West. It is your fate to fall between the two.

If politics had been different—perhaps one might have done something. But this war has gone all wrong, and the more the Allies win, the further wrong their governments go. Conservatives are not only in the saddle but aggressively so. It is the Winston era for the present at least and there can be no common ground between us and Winston, who represents England today.

This war will end some time or other—not soon though. And then trouble and more trouble—possibly more wars. And so the sands of life will run out.

x x x x

Chand & Tara are already justifying their going to the U.S. They are being made much of. I hope it does not go to their heads. Chand has got the first Mayling Soong scholarship. I am glad as this is yet another small link between China & India.

x x x x

Mahmud, after a period of fair health and unusual energy, has had a relapse today. Malaria possibly. Curiously enough he returned to his old room (with Asaf) only today. It has been fixed up that I join him there tomorrow and Asaf comes to my room. This was decided upon some days ago and thereby hangs a tale. So I shall leave this room of mine tomorrow where I have lived for eleven months and five or six days.

x x x x

Narendra Deva has had a very bad and a very lengthy attack of asthma—ten days full of torture. He grows worse and weaker. It is awful to hear him groaning and gasping for breath. He is a little better today.

July 17, 1943

Darling Indu,

Your letter No. 17 dated 6th July reached me as I was finishing my last letter to you. During the last week I have had no further news of you but I expect to have a letter from you today. It usually comes on Saturdays.

I have received the cigarette case and the 6 boxes of cigarettes. Also the books you sent me (Shridharani's and *Russian Fables* &c.).

You are needlessly alarmed about my spinning. I never thought that I could supply you or myself with enough yarn to make any appreciable difference. I have long been thinking of going back to it chiefly because I rather like it and it is extraordinarily soothing—in relatively small doses. It is not going to take the place of gardening and I do not think it will affect my arm now. I shall probably spin a little daily and watch results. If these results are in any way unsatisfactory, I shall give it up. At the most I shall spin an hour a day, probably less.

I have had no trouble with my feet, as far as I can remember, for over 20 years in spite of *chappals* and the like. But I do think *chappals* are not good for the feet except for home wear. It is absurd to go for a long walk in them, and in a crowd they are a nuisance and sometimes

give a great deal of trouble. I think my immunity from foot trouble has largely been due to my old habit of running which has kept the foot muscles strong and the arch of the foot firm in spite of *chappals*. For the last four or five years I have been wearing *Peshawari chappals* with a rubber heel added. This gives nearly an inch of heel. I find now that I feel uncomfortable in ordinary heelless *chappals*. My balance is upset a little and there is no proper grip. So I can quite understand your difficulties. You had better wear well-fitting shoes with inside supports when necessary.

Many weeks ago I asked Betty to write to Walsh, my publisher in America, and tell him to continue my subscriptions to various American periodicals. She says she has done so, but she was doubtful of her letter reaching him as she had written to him repeatedly without eliciting an answer. I do not understand why letters should not reach America, especially more or less business letters. With so many Americans in India, there must be a big mail coming from the U.S. I suggest that you might also write to Walsh and give him the list of periodicals and tell him that I would be grateful if he could arrange to have them sent regularly, paying for them out of my royalty account with him. In case there is nothing left in this account (which is unlikely), I shall try to arrange for a remittance. Mention to him that Betty has already written at my instance but the list you are sending is a longer one than the one Betty sent. I had forgotten to add one or two papers then. Here is the list: *Life*, *Time*, *Nation*, *New Republic*, *Reader's Digest*, *Fortune* (for Feroze), *Asia*, *Amerasia*, *Pacific Affairs* (quarterly), *Foreign Affairs* (quarterly). Ten in all. To which he can add any others he considers appropriate.

You might also ask him to send a second copy of *Asia* addressed to you direct. It is a good magazine and two copies will be easily utilised. All my papers and periodicals should of course be sent to Anand Bhawan. I imagine this list will amount to about \$ 60 or \$ 70 (but you need not mention this to him).

In some American magazine I have seen a review of an American edition of my *Unity of India*, published by John Day. I have not seen this book yet. It appears that it came out in December or January last. Tell Walsh that I should like to see it, if it is possible for him to send a copy. Walsh's address is:

Richard J. Walsh,
The John Day Company Inc.,
Publishers,
40 East 49th Street, New York City,
U.S.A.

The Times Book Club of London continue to send me some periodicals—*New Statesman* &c.,—although I have not paid them anything for years. They have been very decent about it, possibly because I am one of their earliest members and subscribers. When you write to Krishna next you might ask him to settle my account with the T.B.C. out of any royalty monies he may hold on my behalf. Of course if he has no such money, he should not pay. Or perhaps it is easier for you to deal directly with the T.B.C. You can ask Bachhraj to send them £20 on account and write & tell them that you are doing so, asking them how my account stands. I suppose there is no difficulty in sending money to England. You might find out from the T.B.C. what papers they are sending me now—I am not sure. They should continue sending them till further instructions. The T.B.C. address is: The Times Book Club, 42 Wigmore Street, London W 1. My subscriber's number with them is I 2966.

Yesterday I had a letter from *Puphi* from Mussoorie. She gave me some news of Ranjit who is slowly progressing in the Balrampur Hospital.

As soon as you tell me of the address where they are to be sent to, I shall send you a few books. Among these will be Sylvain Levi's *Le Theatre Indien* which, after a lot of searching and hunting, Psyche unearthed for me from the library of the Bombay branch of the Royal Asiatic Society. Please give this book to her. But before you do so, you might glance through it yourself. The book is an old one, published in 1890 but it is nevertheless interesting. Probably you know very little about the old Indian theatre—very few people in India do. That is remarkable enough. And yet I think this subject is a fascinating one and tells us a great deal about our early beginnings and cultural background. Do not trouble to read the whole book. Big chunks of it are technical & dry. Glance through the introduction, the *Histoire de la litterature Dramatique*, *Les Origines du Drama* (parts), *L'Influence Grecque*, and the two final chapters.

Do you remember the visit we paid in Paris to Madame Sylvain Levi in 1938? Her husband had died a few months earlier and she was inconsolable.

I am returning *Life*, *Time* &c to Betty. Tell me if you want them and I shall send them to you direct. One number of *Life* I shall send you anyhow. This contains new kinds of charts and maps which can be cut out and stuck in some kind of rectangular blocks. You can try to do this. This is supposed to give a much clearer idea of the world as it is.

Here is something from Ghalib:

تو اور آرائش خم کا کل
(غالب) میں اور اندیشہ ہائے دور دراز

In Hindi :

तू, और आराएँ खेमे काकुल
मैं, और अंदेश हाए दूर ओ दराज़! ²³⁸

खम means curl; काकुल means the hair in front and sides; खेमे काकुल = front and side curls.

This is from Amir.²³⁹

ہے آج جو سرگزشت اپنی
(امیر) کل اس کی کہانیاں بنیں گی
ہے آج جو سر गुज्रत अपनी
कल इसकी कहानियां बनेंगी ! ²⁴⁰

सर गुज्रत = what is happening = जो बाक्यात हम पर गुजर रहे हैं.

This is my letter No. 19.

No letter from you has come thus far. I shall wait a little longer and then send this off.

Love

Your loving
Papu

July 20. Tuesday

A few days ago Narendra Deva received a letter from his son in Fyzabad. In this it was written that Feroze had been released on July 10th.²⁴¹ Now I received a letter from Indu dated July 14th (from Panchgani). There is no mention of Feroze in it! Odd.

238. Ghalib: You and I, together,
A picture we do make;
You—engaged in plaiting and braiding
the twists and twirls of your lock;
And me—my eyes fixed on you—absorbed
in the twirl of my thoughts!

239. Amir Khusru (1255-1325).

240. Amir: What goes on with us today,
Tomorrow tales of it
They'll make!

241. Feroze Gandhi was released from the Fyzabad Jail on 8 July 1943 on grounds of ill-health.

x x x x

I have settled down with Mahmud now in our joint room. Some time has been spent in arranging things. I am well enough here but the *asans* &c. are not being continued. I prefer to be alone for them. As a matter of fact I am taking plenty of exercise in the garden.

x x x x

No further news of Bapu. But the time draws near when there is bound to be plenty of news—

July 22. Thursday

Another letter from Indu from Panchgani. Feroze was released on July 10th—somebody paying his fine and his year's sentence being over. He is in Panchgani with Indu & Psyche.

x x x x

Indu is evidently getting a little fed up with just resting, or, rather, feels that this passive existence is not good enough when so many of our friends and colleagues are in prison. She wants to do something—what exactly I do not know. I can quite understand and appreciate this desire to be up and doing. To begin with she wants to pay a few visits, more especially to Amma in Lahore.

x x x x

Seventeen days to the 8th August! What will this bring?

July 24. 1943

Darling Indu,

Since I wrote to you last week I have had two letters from you, your numbers 18 and 19. You have now caught up to me. This is my letter No. 20.

I was not terribly surprised when I read in your letter that Feroze had arrived in Panchgani; indeed the surprise came earlier in another

way. It so happened that I learnt of Feroze's release from a letter Narendra Deva received from his son in Fyzabad. He wrote that Feroze had been discharged on the 10th. Later I received your letter of the 14th and I confidently expected some mention of Feroze in it. Imagine my surprise to find no mention at all! I wondered if the news that had been conveyed to me was wrong and untrue. I came to the conclusion that possibly Feroze did not know that you were at Panchgani and hence the delay in informing you. I expected him to roll up suddenly at Panchgani—and so he did. It is just like him.

I hope he is well and his foot has recovered. I must now give effect to a resolution I made some months ago. Will you give Feroze, on my behalf, a Schick electric shaver—mind it is a Schick. The other ones are not, I think, so good. Draw the money for it from my account at Bachhraj's. You can find out from Betty where this shaver can be obtained in Bombay. I have now been using it daily for just over six months and I am a complete convert to it. It is undoubtedly an improvement on old-style methods. Only one cannot discard wholly the old razor as electric current is not always available in India.

Your letters leave me in doubt about your programme and how long you will stay at Panchgani. Anyway I am continuing to send my letters there till you send me a new address. I do not want my letters to go astray.

About the books I wish to return, I think I had best send them to Betty in Bombay. It is no good burdening you with them and perhaps take the chance of missing you. In any case you will pass through Bombay and you can then dispose of them. Tell Psyche I am sending Sylvain Levi's book to Betty. This being a rare book and a borrowed one has to be carefully looked after.

Betty has sent me my *Unity of India*. Also the eye-drops, Murine, as well as some other stuff for the eyes.

You need not trouble to send *The Leader* or *The Pioneer* here. I am not anxious to have them. I read newspapers of course but I rather grudge the time they take up. My own world at present is so far removed from the world of action that my interest in the latter is distant. Besides, *The Leader* came here for a week or two and it was so dull and uninteresting that we stopped it.

I am sorry to learn about Nora's health. She is quite extraordinarily careless and observes no rules or discipline.

I had not heard previously about the difference of opinion between Mohan Bhai and Krishnaji in regard to any disposal of our goods. Personally I am very definitely of opinion that our goods should not be sold. Goods and things are far more important than money, especially

in these days when so many things are almost unobtainable. So I agree with Krishnaji.

When you go visiting I suppose Feroze will go with you. He should do so, especially when you go to *Nani*. In Lahore you have plenty of friends and you will of course see them. Do not forget to call on our hostess, Ismet.²⁴² Also you should visit Bijju *chacha's* mother, the Rani, and Ram Lall's wife, the Diwani.

I am giving you below three couplets of Ghalib. They are sad and written in utter disillusion, written after the tragic happenings of 1857 and 58. Ghalib's world had come to an end, the shadowy Delhi court was no more, his friends were dead or in great distress. There was hardly any centre or place for the culture he represented. This feeling must have been widespread among the relics of the old world in India then. The shock had been terrible and had brought ruin to everything he valued.

رہیے ایسی جگہ چل کر جہاں کوئی نہ ہو
 ہم سخن کوئی نہ ہو اور ہم زباں کوئی نہ ہو
 بے در و دیوار سا اک گھر بنایا چاہیے
 کوئی ہمسایہ نہ ہو اور پاسباں کوئی نہ ہو
 پڑیے گر بیمار تو کوئی نہ ہو تیمار دار
 اور اگر مر جائیے تو نوحہ خواں کوئی نہ ہو
 (غالب)

In Hindi:

رہیے ایسی جگہ چل کر، جہاں کوئی نہ ہو
 ہم سبھن کوئی نہ ہو اور ہم زباں کوئی نہ ہو
 بے در و دیوار سا اک گھر بنایا چاہیے
 کوئی ہم سا یا نہ ہو، اور پاسباں کوئی نہ ہو
 پڑیے گر بیمار، تو کوئی نہ ہو تیماردار
 اور اگر مر جا دیے تو نوحہ خواں کوئی نہ ہو²⁴³

242. Wife of Mian Iftikharuddin.

243. Ghalib: I long to live where I'm all alone;
 With none to speak to
 And none to share my thoughts!
 A dwelling without doors and walls it be
 With no neighbour and no guard;
 None to tend me if sick I lie
 And none to mourn if there I die!

सखुन=बात; हम सखुन=a person with whom one converses; हम साया=one living in the same shelter; पासबां=guardian; तीमारदार=one who nurses an ill person; नोहाइवां=mourner.

With love to you and Feroze,

Your loving
Papu

July 25. Sunday

Some items of news in the papers, about the letter Bapu is supposed to have written to Linlithgow, pleased me. It was stated, apparently with some authority, that although he had written, there was no mention or question of withdrawing the August Resolution, or of fasting. He is alleged to have written about the food situation.

x x x x

Other news from the N.W.F.P. & Sind also encouraging.²⁴⁴

x x x x

I have been reading for some time past Beards' *Rise of American Civilization*.²⁴⁵ Have nearly finished Volume I. Found it very interesting and helpful. I am also reading *Ambassador Dodd's Diary* 1933-38.²⁴⁶

July 27. Tuesday

Yesterday morning the Supdt. told us that the radio had announced Mussolini's resignation.²⁴⁷ Details lacking. Still it is a big event of

244. There were reports that Congressmen of these two provinces had dissociated themselves from a move to summon an All India Congress Committee to suspend the August Resolution.

245. Charles Beard and Mary Beard: *The Rise of American Civilization*, 3 volumes, (1928).

246. William Edward Dodd; U.S. Ambassador to Germany, 1933-37. The diary, edited by William E. Dodd Jr. and Martha Dodd, is a record of diplomatic relations of Germany from June 1933 to December 1937.

247. Mussolini was overthrown on 25 July 1943.

great significance. Twenty years—or is it twenty-one?—of bombast and bullying, of vulgarity and a new low level in political action and speeches, till that level itself became relatively high, compared to some of the Nazi crowd. What an age this period seems! And it is over at last.

The cracking up of the Italian armies is not very surprising. But the beginning of a similar process in the German army is surprising. The collapse in North Africa was the first sign of it. The defeats in Russia did not necessarily mean this—rather it meant the growing strength and the fine generalship of the Russians.²⁴⁸

The war has definitely entered a new phase—the decline of the Axis—How long will this last? Pretty long I imagine. I do not just see Germany giving in easily. Perhaps in desperation gas and other similar awful devices might be used. And Japan? The toughest nut of all—

x

x

x

x

The formation of a Free German Committee²⁴⁹ in Russia is most intriguing. No comment on it anywhere! Everybody in England & America mum! What a headache this must have given to the bosses in Whitehall and Washington—with their crowds, minor royalties and 'free governments'!

x

x

x

x

Last evening we heard that someone had attacked Jinnah with a knife on his arrival in Bombay.²⁵⁰ No serious injury. Relieved to learn that it was not a Hindu who did it; otherwise inevitable Hindu-Muslim riots. This morning came the news that the person who attacked was a Khaksar. This even more satisfactory—not the attack of course. No one can make out that any nationalist elements—Hindu or Muslim—party to it.

248. At the beginning of 1943, while one German army was crushed at Stalingrad, another was driven out from the Caucasus. The siege of Leningrad was broken and by March 1943, the threat to Moscow was ended. Later in the year Russia captured Kharkov, Smolensk and pushed the Germans out of the Donets basin.

249. In July 1943, a Free German Committee was established in Moscow. It included, among its members, German prisoners of war, Reichstag deputies and trade unionists.

250. Jinnah escaped serious injury on 26 July 1943 when he was attacked with a knife by a Muslim who described himself as a Khaksar.

This may be the act of an individual—Allama Mashriqi has condemned it.²⁵¹ Nevertheless it indicates a background of bitterness against Jinnah among certain groups of Muslims.

x x x x

What a fall for Allama Mashriqi! He has practically dissolved the Khaksars (this nothing to do with the Jinnah incident but preceded it) when Govt. threatened to take action against him again.²⁵² His statement is pitiful. Another bubble-burst—

x x x x

Odd bits of news in the newspapers sometimes give revealing glimpses of what took place in August-September last. There have been several reported cases of the armed police themselves indulging in sabotage, or the appearance of sabotage, so that they might arrest some thoroughly innocent persons and thus gain a reward. Two such cases in the papers were particularly ghastly. In both the policemen committed cold-blooded & brutal murders. One was a U.P. case of a *bania* & his wife being murdered because the *bania* did not give sufficient gratification.²⁵³ This was in Allahabad district. The police stuck a Congress flag near a telegraph post and placed a crowbar and nut cracker nearby to represent attempted wire-cutting by Congressmen.

The second case was from Delhi where three boys murdered & a fourth wounded by armed police, who were actually rewarded for scotching sabotage. The real facts²⁵⁴ came out later when they were tried & sentenced to death.

It is rare that such cases come to light. At any time this would be difficult; infinitely more so in present circumstances when a kind of

251. Allama Mashriqi, the leader of the Khaksars, condemned the attack as most "dastardly and mean".

252. On 19 July 1943 the Government warned Allama Mashriqi that if the red symbols were not removed from the arms of the Khaksars and military training not given up their organisation would be banned. Allama Mashriqi instructed the Khaksars to abide by the Government order.

253. The incident took place in Latur village on 16 December 1942.

254. On the night of 30 October 1942, four policemen who were guarding the railway lines near Kishan Ganj shot dead three boys alleged to be stealing coal. When the case was brought before the Sessions Judge of Delhi he remarked that the policemen had shot the boys to win rewards and promotion which had been promised for dealing with sabotage.

martial law prevails under various ordinances²⁵⁵ and the police & military have been given a perfectly free hand and assured that there will be no inquiry. On no account, we are told, will there be an inquiry.

How many similar cases must have occurred all over India!

x x x x

In Karachi a young school boy hanged for attempted sabotage..... In North Ireland shooting during a banned demonstration to celebrate the Easter Rising.²⁵⁶ Policeman dies, others injured—Tremendous hullabaloo all over country, & demand that the boys implicated should be dealt with lightly. Ultimately one hanged & others sentenced to long terms.

Ramesh Chandra (in Aligarh jail?) said to have committed suicide²⁵⁷ by jumping down a well inside the jail one day after admission. Absurd story that he asked to be put with other political prisoners. This being refused he committed suicide that very evening! Quite singularly like Nazi story of suicide and shot while attempting to escape.

It is reported that in the Benares inspectorate of education (roughly the Benares Division) 17000 students turned out of schools & colleges during August-September by the authorities. If that is so in one such area, what of the whole of India?

x x x x

A brief note stated that some 600 (I write from memory) cases had been disposed of or were being tried by the Special Courts in Benares. The Special Courts having suddenly ceased to exist on account of the Federal Court's decision & Govt's. subsequent ordinance, this fact came out.²⁵⁸

600 cases—each probably a group one—often so-called conspiracies—must involve at least 2000 to 3000 persons. This in one area. What of India?

x x x x

255. By the end of 1944, over 300 ordinances were in force.

256. A rebellion in Dublin and other parts of Ireland from 24 to 29 April 1916 to secure immediate Irish independence.

257. On 18 July 1943.

258. The Special Courts Ordinance authorised provincial governments to establish special courts for the trial of criminal offences during political disturbances. As the Federal Court held it invalid, the Viceroy issued a fresh ordinance.

Some of these Special Courts cases have now gone up to the regular courts. The result of this has been an acquittal and caustic remarks by the judge on the total insufficiency of the evidence on which persons were convicted.

x x x x

The *New Statesman* of London gives the following figures (official) for India. These figures given in March 1943 in the House of Commons:

Killed	1028
Wounded	3200
Flogged	900
In jail	44000

x x x x

And Chimur!²⁵⁹ How many other places like it?

27.7.43

Darling Bets,

I do not particularly like the idea of foodstuffs being sent to me. Everything that is sent is opened, examined and repacked, in the Bombay Secretariat, and this repeated handling of foodstuffs is not too good for them.

A few lines of your last letter have been blacked out, after your reference to Krishna's cable.

Indu has communicated to me parts of Agatha's airgraph to you. I was glad to have news of her. She is a dear old soul, always hard at work.

I am very glad Raja has been feeling better and is improving. That is good news. Harsha's fever, I hope, has passed.

Yes, letters come in official envelopes—O.H.M.S.—why I don't quite know. That must be one of the secrets on which the British Empire

259. Four officials were killed in rioting in Chimur on 16 August 1942, following police firing on a procession taken out in protest against the arrest of Congress leaders. The Government imposed a collective fine, sentenced 20 persons to death and 20 to life imprisonment. There were allegations of atrocities by police and troops.

in India is run. Perhaps it is not considered desirable for the post office people to see our names or handwriting on the envelopes.

Love to you and Raja.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

July 30—Friday

Today's newspapers have upset me and filled me with anger.

Item No. 1: A Bombay High Court judgment. Someone²⁶⁰ in Poona, apparently occupying a responsible position, wrote to the Govt. of Bombay about various firings by the police in the city. He wrote very courteously (dissociating himself from the Congress & even condemning the Congress movement) pointing out that a number of innocent women had been shot dead. He gave another instance, supported by eye-witnesses' statements, of a young boy being held by two policemen while a third shot him dead. He made these statements after full enquiry and requested that Govt. should institute a proper inquiry into them. No answer. He wrote again. No answer. He wrote four or five times without eliciting even an acknowledgement. Then he had his letters printed for private circulation among a small number of responsible men. This got him into trouble and he was hauled up before the court.

The High Court held in the man's favour and against Govt. passing caustic remarks²⁶¹ about the attitude of Govt. in the face of a charge of murder by the police, supported by *prima facie* evidence.

A significant case. How many other murders have taken place in India at the hands of the police & military, all covered by the widely spread blanket of Govt. approval of all deeds done by the police & military and absolute refusal to have inquiries!

Item No. 2: A leading article in *The Statesman* from which it appears that Rajkumari Amrit Kaur (no names are mentioned but it is certain that Amrit Kaur is referred to) on arrest was put in an inferior class in

260. R. M. Mandlik (1881-1958); a member of the Bombay Legislative Assembly.

261. "I think the reading of the pamphlet by persons to whom it was sent would induce in their minds a feeling extremely critical of the wisdom of the Government of Bombay...of the way in which Government has dealt with the matter, in never answering these letters, never informing the writer whether there was an inquiry into the matters and if so with what result. It is the omissions of Government which are calculated to occasion criticism."

jail. Moon,²⁶² a very able I.C.S. man of the Punjab, who used to be the Governor's Secretary and a right hand man of Sikandar Hayat, heard of this, and wrote to the Govt. (Punjab presumably) inquiring about this and pointing out that she belonged to a very distinguished family &c., &c. Evidently he suggested that she should be given better treatment in jail.²⁶³ He got an answer from Govt. saying that they were fully aware who she was and that she had been given an inferior class in prison as a result of the deliberate policy of Govt. to treat rigorously all Congress prisoners—much more so than previously because of the damnable activities of the Congress &c. (the language is mine but the thought behind it the Govt.'s). Moon, therefore, sent this Govt. letter with his own critical comments to a near relative of this lady—probably Maharaj Singh or Dulip Singh²⁶⁴—who is said to have occupied high Govt. office. This letter was intercepted. As a result Moon had to resign from the I.C.S. and he is not even getting his pension. (Possibly he refused to take the pension.) All the facts are not given and *The Statesman* asks for them from Govt.

The mind of Govt.—how this shines forth in all its ugliness & with all its venom from this incident! Poor Amrit. That is the reward she has got for her friendship with Linlithgow & Co.

If Amrit is treated thus, what of the tens of thousands of others? Curiously enough the Punjab, where, so far as I know, nothing happened in pursuance of the Congress resolution, is one of the worst provinces in this respect. Chaman Lall & Gopi Chand, being removed to hospital for treatment, were taken, it is reported in the press, in handcuffs. Chaman's first experience of jail—a hard one! What is happening to Iftikhar and others?²⁶⁵ Bijju Bhabhi,²⁶⁶ I remember, was not allowed any book except the *Gita*.

262. Penderel Moon (b. 1905); joined I.C.S. in 1929; resigned in 1944; author of *Strangers in India, Divide and Quit*—and *Gandhi and Modern India*; edited *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*; now assistant editor, *The Transfer of Power* 1942-7.

263. When Rajkumari Amrit Kaur was arrested in August 1942 and sent to jail she was not allowed to take her clothes and she had to manage for a month on one change of clothes. She was kept in a filthy cell, and her food was so bad that she would not eat and within a week was on the sick list.

264. Brother of Rajkumari Amrit Kaur; a former judge of Lahore High Court; member of the I.N.A. Defence Committee, 1945-47.

265. In fact, Mian Iftikharuddin was out of jail and supporting Rajagopalachari's efforts.

266. On 19 July 1943, Rameshwari Nehru was sentenced to 3 months' imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 1000 for having participated in a meeting of the All India Women's Conference.

Item No 3: A debate in the Calcutta Corporation about the non-disposal of dead bodies lying about in the streets.²⁶⁷ Bodies of men & women who died of starvation! Evidently quite a considerable number of them about—One charitable organisation disposed of about 25. But a difficulty arises—corpses may not be removed without police permission! So they lie in the open for a whole day.

Some starving and half-dying wretches taken from the streets to a hospital. Refused admission, as hospitals are meant for persons suffering from diseases not for those who are just starving. No room or provision in hospitals for them. Starvation is after all a common experience in India.

So the debate was about the speedy disposal of the dead, whose corpses hurt the tender susceptibilities of the well-to-do, and possibly spread disease. The European Association demands suspension of the Corporation, as if the Govt. has nothing to do with the matter and is in no way responsible.

Hardly any mention in the debate about the awful & horrible fact of starvation. Perhaps the report was too brief. Perhaps such mention or stress on it not permitted by the Defence of India Rules, or else why are not Calcutta papers full of it? There has hardly been any mention of it, although there is much talk of the food situation.

Ghastly, horrible. If this is so in Calcutta, what of the *mofussil* & the small towns of Bengal? And in poverty-stricken Orissa? And elsewhere?²⁶⁸

Long live Provincial Autonomy & the Muslim League!

Thousands must be dying of starvation daily all over India. There was a report of this from Orissa also. By the time this horror ends or is checked there will possibly be more casualties from starvation in India than from the war. This is the beginning only.

x

x

x

x

267. By the end of July 1943 destitutes, who had migrated to Calcutta from the rural areas of Bengal, had begun dying in the streets. On 26 July, 27 bodies were counted on the streets. When the problem of the speedy removal of these bodies on the pavements was discussed at a meeting of the Calcutta Corporation on 28 July, the difficulty of removing them, as police permission was necessary, was mentioned.

268. Famine conditions obtained in certain areas of Orissa, of Malabar and of the States of Cochin and Travancore. More than 12,000 people died in Orissa while in the South, the famine coupled with epidemics caused 30,000 deaths.

Index figures in India have mounted up tremendously.²⁶⁹ Probably there is no parallel to this rise in India at least. 350 is the figure in Calcutta, Cawnpore & in many places. Wheat 2 seers to the rupee—rice—a little over one seer per rupee— How can the poor, or even the lower middle class people, face this?

The Punjab & Sind, being surplus provinces, do not suffer from lack of food. Indeed they are making money out of other people's misfortune.

x x x x

What a Govt! Hopelessly incompetent & totally incapable of dealing with the situation. It is sickening to realise that the fates of hundreds of millions of our countrymen are in the hands of these selfish, cruel, conceited, pompous incompetents & fools.

And our own people who are helping them? Disgusting and contemptible traitors & opportunists.

What of the general mass? Are they just cowards or worse? Dying like cattle without making themselves felt—submitting to every degradation and indignity — But how can one blame these unhappy & miserable people. It is the upper strata that must shoulder the blame and responsibility.

x x x x

The Four Freedoms of Roosevelt²⁷⁰—Freedom from Want!

x x x x

To what end all this? To what end?

July 31, Saturday

We were mistaken about one matter yesterday. The Moon incident was not in connection with Amrit Kaur but with Bijju Bhabi—So *The*

269. The food price index, which was 195 in December 1942 (1939-100), had risen to 243 in December 1943. The working class cost of living index had risen to 236 in November 1943.

270. In his message to Congress on 6 January 1941, Roosevelt defined "the four essential human freedoms" which should prevail everywhere in the world. They were—freedom of speech and expression, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear. These were substantially incorporated in the Atlantic Charter.

Hindu correspondent says.²⁷¹ It appears also that Moon was not the only high official who was summarily removed because of his criticism of Govt. policy. H.V. Hodson, the Reforms Commissioner, had also to go because of this. The Bihar Governor also had to resign apparently because he was considered too lenient and he advised the police to be careful.²⁷²

Moon is a fellow of All Souls College—an unusual distinction for an I.C.S. man.

x

x

x

x

Amery, in answer to a question in the Commons, has said that while Gandhiji has not written again to the Viceroy since March last, he has been corresponding with the Home Department of the Govt. of India. He (Amery) refused to say what this correspondence was about. The various press speculations about Gandhiji's letters seem to have been wide of the mark. But one does not quite know yet definitely. Perhaps the next few days or weeks will show.

x

x

x

x

Letter from Indu today from Panchgani. She expects to leave for Bombay in another week.

July 31, 1943

Indu Darling,

I have your letter No. 20 of the 20th July. This is my letter No. 21.

I was glad to have news of Agatha and of her tiny garden of flowers and tomatoes. She is a dear and always trying her best to keep things going.

I wonder if you are still in Panchgani. Anyway this letter goes there and I hope it will reach you.

271. In fact, *The Hindu* was wrong and Moon had protested about the treatment of Amrit Kaur.

272. Sir Thomas Stewart, Governor of Bihar, issued a circular to the District Magistrates of his Province in November 1942 suggesting that they should pay serious attention to all complaints of excesses by the police. He also took disciplinary action against the police officers who had exceeded their authority. Soon after he left his post and it was officially stated that he had resigned on grounds of health.

About your visiting various relatives, the point you and Feroze have raised is certainly important. It would be unwise and a pity if you took any risks to your health and lost much of the benefit your rest at Panchgani & c has given you. That fact must be borne in mind. It is not easy for me to advise you, except very generally, as I feel cut off and do not know what exactly you intend doing. It is true that Lahore is not a desirable place in August but it is not so bad as, for instance, the Frontier Province. Peshawar's worst month is August. If there is rain in Lahore the temperature comes down, as in Allahabad, though there is usually much less rain. I notice that the Lahore temperature, as given in the papers, has come down to 95° or 96°. It must, however, be close and stuffy, as in Allahabad, only more so. September is somewhat better and October is definitely a good month, better than in Allahabad. Probably the second half of September is not bad either.

I do not know what visits you wish to pay, apart from Lahore. You mentioned Jaipur, I think. This should be ruled out till October. If you intend spending much of your time in Allahabad, there is not too much difference between this and Lahore in August–September. It would certainly be undesirable for you to take the long journey from Panchgani direct to Lahore. Apart from the weather, railway journeys nowadays are said to be exceedingly trying. There is far too much overcrowding. Journeys should be taken in easy stages.

I think it would be better not to say to *Nani* that you are postponing your visit to the winter. That would be too vague and distant and, as one never knows what might happen, it might almost mean an indefinite postponement. Better say that you will come a few weeks later. As it is, you could hardly have got there much before the middle of August. Taking easy journeys with halts—this can be extended without difficulty to the second week of September or even later. From Panchgani you could go to Bombay—that is almost inevitable—and after a brief stay there to Allahabad, where you could stay a little longer. It would be a little better to break journey at Delhi on your way to Lahore from Allahabad, but that can be fixed up to suit your convenience. I am thinking more of the extreme discomfort of railway travelling in these days than of the weather.

In this way *Nani* & *Mamu* would not feel that you are putting off your visit indefinitely, and you could develop your programme, keeping in view your own health and the changing weather. You could of course stay on in Panchgani a little longer.

All this is for you and Feroze to consider in relation to any other programme you may have in mind. Do not take my general indication

as definite advice, for I am not in a position to be definite. In any event a journey direct from Panchgani or even Bombay to Lahore is to be avoided. That would make you go through the hottest part of India, and it is too long.

I wrote to *Nani* just before I received your last letter. In that I merely said that you were likely to visit her. I shall write again but I cannot do so for another week or so.

Do not worry about these petty matters—programmes &c. It is no good thinking too much about them. Fix up what you think proper and carry it out, keeping in view the reaction on your health. The best way probably will be for you to extend your stay in Panchgani. Bombay, so Betty writes, is having vile weather and many people are laid up. Poona is also a possible place for a stay.

I had a letter from *Puphi* (Nan) from Mussoorie. She had a bad fainting fit lasting two or three hours. I am worried about her. Her blood-pressure is terribly low and that is a very risky business.x x x²⁷³

I shall not write to you any Urdu couplets today. Instead I shall write about Amir Khusrau, for the rainy season and the month of सावन (श्रावण)²⁷⁴ inevitably remind one of him. Do you know him at all? Yet it was some phrase of yours that made me think of him. You wrote about the rains in Panchgani and the freshness and loveliness all about you. For long ages past this is the season which has been sung in Sanskrit and Prakrit and *Apabhransh* and Hindi all over northern India certainly and partly elsewhere. Though वसन्त²⁷⁵ is celebrated, it is really सावन that represents the spirit of spring in India and the koel takes the place of the bulbul of Iran. होली²⁷⁶ is the वसन्त celebration.

Amir Khusrau lived in the 14th century (that is long before Babar & the Mughals came to India.) His family had originally come from Turkistan in Central Asia and had settled down in Etah district in the U.P. where Khusrau was born at Patiali. He was a very fine poet in Persian. Also wrote in Arabic. Knew Sanskrit. He was indeed an amazingly versatile man. Was a great musician and is said to have invented the सितार²⁷⁷ or rather adapted it from the age-old वीना²⁷⁸. He invented any number of राग्स²⁷⁹ and रागिनीs²⁸⁰

273. Five lines were blacked out by the censor.

274. *Savan* (*shravana*)—Fifth month of the lunar year.

275. *Vasanta*—Spring.

276. *Holi*.

277. *Sitar*.

278. *Vina*.

279. *Ragas*.

280. *Raginis*.

But above all he was a maker and singer of popular songs. He entered into the very spirit of the Indian masses, wrote for them, and even in his lifetime, his songs were sung all over the villages of the north. Six hundred years afterwards, that is now, they are equally popular and thousands of village girls must be singing them today as they swing rhythmically on the झूला.²⁸¹ That is an astonishing performance and an amazing record. Here is one of them.

जो पिया आवन कह गए, अज्हो न आए स्वामी हो!
ऐ हो! जो पिया आवन कह गए, आवन आवन कह गए
आए न बारा मास—ऐ जो पिया आवन कह गए etc. etc.²⁸²

Observe the rhythm and the lilt of the refrain, just fitting in with the swing of the झूला — the हो²⁸³ signaling the push at each end — the पेंग.²⁸⁴

Then he was an extraordinary juggler of words. His riddles पहेली are famous. I remember learning them in my childhood from Mohan chacha's mother, whom you will hardly remember. Here is an example:

बीसों का सर काट लिया, न मारा ना खून किया²⁸⁵

The actual answer is given cleverly in the riddle itself नाखून (finger nail).

Another play on words—this kind of thing is called दो सङ्गे.²⁸⁶

281. *Jhula*—a swing.

282. My husband said,

“I will come,

I will come back soon, my dear.”

Then he took his leave!

O me, still my master has not come!

Yes, he said, “I will come,

I will come back soon!”

But twelve long months have passed away;

He has not yet come!

He did say, yes, he did,

When he took his leave,

“I will come, my dear,

I will come back soon!”

283. *Ho*.

284. *Peng*—Push.

285. Scores of heads it did sever

Yet it killed no one.

And no one's blood did it shed!

286. Expressions having double meaning.

जूता क्यों न पहना ? सम्बोसा क्यों न खाया ?

तला न था—

गोश्त क्यों [न] खाया ? डोम क्यों न गाया ?

गला न था—²⁸⁷

Different meanings of words brought out thus.

There are ever so many other word puzzles and jingles called मुक़र्नी, डकोस्ता etc. Sometimes they are in a mixture of Hindi and Persian. He actually wrote a book of couplets—one line in Persian, the other in Hindi, same meanings, thus making it easy to learn the languages. This book is called *Khaliqbari* and is even today taught in *maktabs*!

Amir Khusrau, among other things, wrote a book enumerating and discussing special and outstanding merits of India. Among the things India was first in, he writes, are :

- 1 Religion and Philosophy
- 2 Mathematics
- 3 Music
- 4 Language & grammar (referring to Sanskrit) &c., &c.

Mentioning also among fruits the mango!

So much for Khusrau. Was he not an extraordinary person and a fascinating one? There are many stories about him. How he would be recognized by the village girls who would insist on his making a new song or verse for them—Is it not natural that in the month of *Sawan* one's mind should travel way back through six centuries to him?

It is curious that the language he used in his songs is still prevalent round about Delhi and in the northern parts of the U.P. Many of these songs are of different seasons, of brides going with their husbands, of brides wanting to come back to their old homes मैका.²⁸⁸ Is this not rather a typical Indian habit? Or may be it existed in China too.

It is well to think of these lighter aspects of life in these heavy days. Food conditions outside appear to be very bad and I shudder to think of the fate of vast numbers of our people.

287. You did not wear the shoes, why?

You did not take the *samosa*, why?

Neither was well-done.

You did not take the meat, why?

The songster did not sing, why?

Neither was well-prepared.

(The explanation would be: The shoes had no soles and the *samosa* was not fried well. There is a pun on the word *tala* which means 'a sole' and construed with *hua* it means 'fried'. There is also a pun on the word *gala* which means 'throat' and construed with *hua* it means 'boiled well'.)

288. *Maika*—Mother's home.

As I was writing the last line, your letter No. 21 of the 26th July came in. Yes I received the numbers of *Life* you refer to. They have now been returned to *Chhoti Puphi*.

I shall give all the food information you have given to Mahmud. May it do him good!

I am noting that you intend leaving Panchgani on the 7th or 8th. But where do you go to? Where am I to send my next letter? To Bombay?

Love

Your loving
Papu

August 7, 1943

Indu Darling,

You will be leaving Panchgani today or tomorrow according to your programme. It is not clear where you go to, but I suppose Bombay is an inevitable halting place. Bombay just at present must be having a bad spell of weather—so Betty wrote to me. I suppose that was why she sought refuge in Delhi for a few days. North India, though warmer, is probably healthier now than Bombay.

I have communicated your list of foods containing ferrocine and vitamin A to Mahmud and to others interested therein. There is a saying that in youth one thinks of love, in middle age of food, and later of medicine. I do not know what stage I am in but it is certainly not of medicine. Most of my colleagues here are, however, unfortunately full of medicine and even food takes a medical aspect. So this business of vitamins and proteins and carbohydrates &c. is of interest to them. I seem to prosper without giving much thought to these very necessary ingredients of one's diet.

Puphi's (Nan's) birthday comes off on August 18th (or August 23 *Samvat* style). I should like you to send her some books on my behalf for that day. I cannot suggest what books for I do not know what is available. You will be able to choose from such as can be had in Bombay. She is likely to stay in Mussoorie till the end of the month, so the books had better be sent there.

I hope you will not forget to get an electric shaver for Feroze—a Schick. This will be my gift to him.

I do not know when I shall start spinning or how long I shall keep it up. But you might send me some good *punis*. Bombay is the only place you are likely to get them easily.

In a day or two we shall complete one full year here. The day we arrived I noticed the new moon—a sight which always pleases me and cheers me up. Since then every new moon has been a signal of the completion of a month. Twelve of them have come, grown fat and round and then faded away. And now the 13th must have appeared two days ago, but I could not see it because of the clouds.

What a year it has been in the world, in India, and here in our tiny self-sufficient world of ours with which we are so tied up! Inevitably, I count up the balance sheet, the good and the ill, and I realise how terribly difficult it is for any one to be truly objective. In all our thoughts we become the centres of the revolving universe, and judge most things in relation to ourselves. And yet we here at any rate inhabit a ghostly realm of limited physical surroundings and unlimited thoughts and ideas—both cut off from the world of reality. Yet again that world of reality itself seems a shadow show of marionettes performing madly and aimlessly, caught in the grip of forces entirely beyond their control or even understanding.

What have I done during this twelve-month? I have read much and some at least of the books have been worthwhile and added to my knowledge and insight. But am I any the wiser for all this browsing and pursuing the printed word? I do not know. I have potted about a good deal round garden beds, and dug with vigour, and played with the soft fresh earth, and watched the seedlings peep out from its surface and look with yearning towards the sun, and grow healthy and strong, and then flower and die. That at least has helped me tremendously to keep physically fit and mentally occupied and turned my mind from happenings that worry and distress.

Anyway I am a year older, as are all of us. But age as it comes inexorably and relentlessly after a certain period of one's life is no welcome visitor. The sense of the work to do, so little done, and ever less and less time to do it, oppresses.

Here is Ghalib—a longer piece than usual, but it can't easily be broken up. It is the lament for the yesterday that is gone, the sorrow of the aged for changes in this changing world, for an ending of the world as they knew it. Always it has been so. Do you remember what Talleyrand²⁸⁹

289. Talleyrand (1754-1838); French diplomat, well-known for always being on the winning side.

said about the French Revolution?²⁹⁰ And what innumerable people have said about the Russian Revolution and indeed every big change that has taken place anywhere in the world—in England, America, &c. In Indian history, in the distant past, there are echoes of this sorrow and irritation at the intrusion of the new. How we all hug our past and our old ways and conventions.

But Ghalib had sufficient reason to be moved and to sorrow when he saw the collapse and destruction of almost everything he valued in the fateful years 1857, 1858 and after. That old ramshackle structure had to go, for it was lifeless already, but the manner of its going was peculiarly painful.

يا شب کو دیکھتے تھے کہ ہر گوشہ بساط دامن باغبان و کف کفروش ہے
 لطف خرام ساقی و ذوق صدا لے چنگ یہ جنت نگاہ، وہ فردوس گوش ہے
 یا صیہدم جو دیکھیے آکر تو بزم میں نے وہ سرور و سورنہ جوش و خروش ہے
 داغ فراق صحبت شب کی جلی ہوئی اک شمع رہ گئی ہے سو وہ بھی خموش ہے
 (غالب)

In Hindi:

कतः

या शब को देखते थे के हर गोश ए विसात
 दामान-ए-बागबान व कफ गुल फ़रोश है
 लुफ-ए-खराम साक्ती, जौक-ए-सदा-ए-चंग
 यह जन्नते निगाह, वो फिरदोस गोश है—
 या सुबहे दम जो देखिये आकर तो बज्म में
 ने वो सुरूरो सूर, न जोश-ओ-ख़रोश है
 दाग-ए-फिराक-ए-सोहबत शब की जली हुई
 इक शमः रह गई है, सो वह भी ख़मोश है²⁹¹

290. "Nobody who did not live in the years around 1780 can have known the pleasure of living."

291. Ghalib: At night all over in the banquet-hall
 A flower-maid's basket it does seem;
 The sound of music
 And the *saqi's* elegant air in walk
 An Edenic treat for ears
 And feast for eyes do they show!

But in morn
 The hall is deserted,
 The music is dead
 And all the hustle gone!
 Only a taper is left to remind
 of the jolly gathering at night—
 And that too blown out!

The comparison is between the evening and the morning after—the evening of joyful assembly and union and the morning, grey and cheerless, with the lamp burnt out and all the companions gone.

शब=evening; गोश=a corner, place; गोश-ए-बिसात=all over the place; कफ़=हथेली—from this here फूल बेचने वाली का हाथ (i.e. both her hand and दामन were full of flowers); ख़राम=चाल; साक़ी=the bearer of the wine-cup; ज़ोक्र=pleasure, delight; सदा-ए-चंग=the sound of the चंग (a kind of sitar); फिरदोस=paradise; गोश=कान; सुभे दम=सुभे का वक्त (from this word दम we have in Hindustani दम लेना); बज़म=the assembly, meeting place; ने=old form of न, नहीं; सुरूरो सूर=हर तरह का मज़ा; फ़िराक़=जुदाई; शम=:light, flame.

The शम: probably refers to Bahadur Shah, the old shadow emperor of Delhi, who had been deposed and sent to Rangoon.

I have just received a box of sweets from Betty—evidently Delhi sweets which she brought with her. Tell her that it has reached me. Also tell her that I received some time ago *The Unity of India* which she sent me. I had forgotten to acknowledge this in my letter to her.

This letter—my No. 22—is being sent C/o Betty to Bombay.

Love

Your loving
Papu

August 8. Sunday

This morning at breakfast, quite unexpectedly, there was a heated interchange of aggressive language between the Maulana and me. It was not much and it lasted barely a minute. Nothing really offensive was said by either of us; we kept more or less within the bounds of propriety. But the tone and manner exhibited irritation against each other—not only present irritation but a little fund of stored up irritation.

A new kind of *dalia* was prepared, or rather it was prepared in a new way. Maulana said that this made it harder to digest. I said that anyway those who were going to take it had good digestion. This remark of mine somehow upset Maulana. It was clear that my references to my own good health, which had not been infrequent in the past, had got on his nerves. I think I have often been to blame (though I was not on this occasion). There is far too much conceit about it and a veiled contempt for the physical weaknesses and ailments of others.

Maulana said something about my arrogance (बमर्द) in regard to my health. I retorted that indeed I was proud of my health and physical

condition and it was distressing enough for me to have to hear so much talk of disease and illness. There were a few more remarks & counter-remarks. Not in the best of taste and partly due to the nerves we develop living in close proximity to each other all the time.

I felt rather sorry afterwards and decided to express my regret to the Maulana. But he forestalled me and at the next meal together he expressed regret before all the others. He made a point of this—doing it before the others who had heard the previous argument. He is the perfect gentleman.

x x x x

And yet there is something more behind these feelings of irritation. Although there is not much difference between our ages, he represents in many ways the old world with its elaborate code of etiquette & manners, while I—I do not know what I represent but I do not represent that old world. My unrestrained remarks and a certain aggressive frankness, as also I suppose an obvious conceit, must irritate the Maulana, just as his ways sometimes irritate me.

My vitality seems to grow with age. It astonishes me. Confined as we are here, I am continually trying to find something to do. The garden takes up quite two to three hours or more—often of hard work. Then I run, do *asans* &c. Maulana, on the other hand, is delicate & sensitive, almost afraid of the open air, fearful of catching a cold, and happy only when he is doing some intellectual work all by himself seated in his room. He hardly takes any kind of exercise.

His lack of movement surprises me. And I can well imagine that my rushing about and fresh-air-fiend habits get on his nerves, and probably get on the others' nerves also.

Perhaps I am not a bad companion on the whole in prison. But I am certainly a trial to most people.

x x x x

So a full year is over here and tomorrow midday we start our second year in Ahmadnagar Fort. We shall celebrate the day in a small way. How will others do so outside? Evidently something was afoot for there have been large numbers of arrests in Bombay, Allahabad and elsewhere in anticipation of it.²⁹² Reading about this, it suddenly struck me that Indu & Feroze were going to Bombay on the 7th, that is just in time for any such celebration. Will they get into trouble?

x x x x

292. In Bombay alone over 300 persons were arrested

What of Bapu? Recent reports indicate that he is not likely to undertake a fast. But one cannot be sure. About his correspondence with the Viceroy, it is now clear that he did not write to the Viceroy at all but wrote repeatedly to the Home Dept., probably about the charges made against the Congress. A revealing question by Hirdayanath Kunzru in the Assembly (or was it the Council of State?) stated that in one of these letters Bapu had asked Govt. to contradict the rumour that he was withdrawing the A.I.C.C. resolution of August 8—a year ago today. This was revealing in two ways. It brought us confirmation of Bapu's attitude and I and others felt greatly relieved and consoled. Also it indicated clearly enough that Hariji, and Moderates and others of his way of thinking, do not want Bapu or the Congress to withdraw this resolution. If that is the attitude of many Moderates, what must be the attitude of Congressmen and others? Clearly the morale of our people is pretty high—And that is a comforting thought.

x

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Reports of odd cases under the D.I.R. come in. Some are truly amazing—a man in Behar sentenced to 5 years R.I. for listening in to the Tokyo radio. Sentence subsequently reduced to 3 years & then to 1 year by the High Court.

For writing a letter (in April 1942) to the Secretary of the District Congress Committee, Gorakhpur, complaining of police extortions for war funds—two years R.I., (reduced subsequently to one year already undergone).

x

x

x

x

Police interrogations in underground cells in the Delhi Fort.²⁹³ Talk of Nazi methods!

x

x

x

x

Meanwhile starvation and famine and death in Bengal & Orissa specially—great scarcity and terribly high prices²⁹⁴ elsewhere.

So the year ends and we launched forth into the second year—for my part full of vitality and, if not exactly hope, with an expectation of big happenings—

293. Two persons had been temporarily detained in the underground cells which were 16 feet below the ground.

294. The price of rice rose by about 8 times from 1942 to July 1943. It was later officially assessed that the grain dealers had made an extra profit of Rs. 150 crores.

End of first year of internment in Ahmadnagar Fort
August 9, 1942 to August 8, 1943

SECOND YEAR

August 9, 1943

August 10. Tuesday

So the second year has begun. We celebrated the anniversary yesterday in a small way. Some decorations in our dining room, our flag (an improvised paper one) of course in evidence, and plenty of balsam flowers—the only ones we have at present in large quantities. Our evening meal was out of the ordinary and Kripalani & Profulla were responsible for it. The Superintendent sent a kind of birthday cake for afternoon tea with a large ‘I’ marked on it. He also arranged for fresh fruit of a better quality and kind than we usually have.

x x x x

We hardly referred to events outside, yet our minds were wandering and we were thinking of them.²⁹⁵ What was happening outside on that day? What of Bapu? Would he take some dramatic step as is his wont?

On the 8th evening Sendak, the Supt., suddenly turned up with a trunk and established himself for the night in his office room here. This was unusual and surprising. His explanation, given the next day, was not an adequate one. He said there had been an influx of officers in Ahmadnagar and he had made room for them for two or three days. But why come here where there are no conveniences for his stay?

Was it that he had received special instructions from Govt. to keep especial watch over us during these days? Did Govt. expect untoward happenings outside, or was there a possibility of Bapu doing something which might create a stir here and outside? The jailer has been ill for the last ten days and unable to leave his bed and this might require greater watchfulness on the part of the Supt. Anyway we shall know soon.

295. The anniversary was marked by bomb explosions in Bombay, Surat and Karachi. Hartals, flag hoistings and processions took place in many centres. A planned demonstration before the Aga Khan Palace was thwarted by the arrest of volunteers.

X

X

X

X

An odd remark made by an unusually stupid person who is functioning now as a Hindu Minister in the Sind Muslim League Ministry—I forget his name—confirmed me in my opinion. He said after a visit to Bombay that ‘capitalists’ were controlling the Congress and preventing any settlement.²⁹⁶ Which of course is excessively silly. But this indicated that he had found considerable sections of the industrialists in Bombay averse to the Congress climbing down to Govt. These industrialists are neither idealists nor are they particularly noted for unselfish activity. Like all their kind elsewhere, their measure of national good & evil is the profit and loss to their class. This is not to say that they are more selfish than the rest of us, but that they identify their group & class interests with national interests. Partly this is correct—in the sense that they represent the industrial growth of the country, and this is urgently needed.

They would like undoubtedly a compromise with Govt. but only on such terms as would give them a free hand to develop India industrially and, incidentally, have bigger profits and dividends for themselves. A surrender by the Congress to Govt. would weaken the national movement and thus weaken their bargaining power. So they are against surrender and therefore for the Congress carrying on without bending the knee.

Kunzru & others like him have also given this indication. If the Moderates & the industrialists think so, how much more must the rank & file of Congress be averse to any climbdown—a few odd individuals like Munshi, Subbarayan, Gopinath Srivastava²⁹⁷ &c excepted. This is clear from the snub Subbarayan & Gopinath got in Bombay & elsewhere recently.²⁹⁸

296. Dr. Hemandas Wadhwani said on 6 August 1943 that the “capitalist class of people with vested interests are the persons who stand in the way of the resolution of the present deadlock. They are the only people who would not permit the Congress to give up its incorrect position.”

297. A member of the A.I.C.C. and a Parliamentary Secretary of the U.P. Government, 1937-39.

298. Over 300 Congress workers, released from various prisons, met on 18 July 1943, and expressed confidence in Mahatma Gandhi’s leadership and deprecated all moves to rescind the August Resolution while Mahatma Gandhi and other Congress leaders were in prison. On 21 July 1943, Dr. Khan Saheb said that “the Frontier will defend the stand taken by the Congress till our leaders are let out. At this stage any talking of withdrawing the August Resolution is inadvisable and irrelevant.”

If I can judge at all of the situation outside, and in the minds of men & women, from the scraps of censored news we get and more so from an intuitive sense of happenings, I would say that there is no lack of vitality in the national movement, in spite of what has happened. Indeed I would say that after the first few shocks, there has been a slow re-adjustment to the new shape of things and a strengthening determination.

In the long run, we are on the upgrade and the British Govt. in India on the downgrade. They have no way out. Their minds are paralysed—or rather, there is no way out on the lines they have always put forward.

x x x x

Odd how the shock of events and the impact of reality has shaped groups & classes. The national movement, as represented principally by the Congress, has essentially two vital classes very largely with it—classes hostile to each other and yet more hostile to foreign rule. The peasant and worker class must inevitably be with it, in spite of weaknesses, confusion and occasional opposition. For different reasons the industrial leaders of the country are also compelled to give support to the Congress. A curious combination full of inner contradictions.

x x x x

The Communists have played a foolish role.²⁹⁹ It was inevitable for them not to side with Congress at this juncture and to support any cause which might help Russia—That was understandable. But they have gone much further and got stuck in a bog. Weak enough before, their influence in the country will inevitably lessen. They have irritated vital & powerful elements in the country. This is sad for they have some very fine men amongst them.

x x x x

The Muslim League & the Hindu Mahasabha appear to me to be essentially rootless and flourishing only on passion & sentiment, powerful enough as these are. Our political resolution is getting more & more

299. The Communist Party opposed the August movement and supported the British war effort calling it a "People's War". The All India Trade Union Congress, which was under the control of the Communists, called for intensified production in the interests of the War, and avoidance of strikes. The Muslim League's Pakistan demand was considered by them as a just aspiration.

entangled with social & economic questions & both the League & the Mahasabha are incapable of understanding, & much less dealing with them.

x

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x

x

I took physical measurement of myself today. Previously I had done this on December 20th last (page 44 *ante*). Here are the figures:

Today (Aug. 10th 1943)		On Dec. 20th 1942	
Weight	132 pounds	139	
Chest	34½ (normal)—37½	36 normal	38 expanded
Waist	28—30 (normal)	29½—32	
Hips	35½	36	
Thigh	20½—18½ (at mark)	21—18½ (at mark)	
Calf	12½	12½	
Upper arm	11—12½	? —12½	

A slight general reduction, most noticeable in regard to the weight & the waist. There has been a drop of 11 lbs. in weight since last August.

August 14. Saturday

Well, nothing remarkable happened at the turn of one year of imprisonment. Reasonably I hardly expected anything spectacular but at the back of my mind there was a definite and yet vague notion that Bapu was likely to do something after his own fashion—which meant fasting. I disliked this idea for obvious reasons, and at the same time half desired it to happen. Curious combination of opposing wishes!

Now that normalcy has not been broken, there has been a slight reaction in our minds, a kind of anti-climax with a general feeling of boredom and vague depression. To add to this came the news of the Muslim League winning in the Frontier elections.³⁰⁰ Not unexpected wholly and yet very disappointing. Elections count for little but the background of growing communalism & separatism means much. I am sorry for Khan Sahib's failure and the swing back of many people in the Frontier.

x

x

x

x

300. The Muslim League won all the four by-elections held in August 1942 in the North West Frontier Province.

Hundreds of people were of course arrested all over the country on or about the 8th & 9th August. That is normal—the normal conditions of British rule today.

Odd reports appear from time to time of curious & significant incidents which exhibit the state of mind of our Fuehrers & Gauleiters in India. A recent report: A senior I.C.S. man (presumably Indian) was hauled up by the Governor of a province and severely castigated and degraded from a responsible post in the Secretariat to a minor district.³⁰¹ Why? Because someone (whose name was not mentioned) had written to his wife. The letter was not received by the wife. It was intercepted by the police. The letter was not even shown to the unfortunate man, nor was the writer's name divulged. How was he responsible, how was even his wife responsible, for what someone had written to her? Nevertheless he was punished!

Indian officials have landed themselves in an extraordinarily difficult position—They must either grovel and degrade themselves absolutely or—get into trouble. Perhaps this is a natural and even desirable development of the crisis. But what passes one's understanding is that members of Executive Councils at the Centre & of Prov. Govts. should accept this dispensation. Everywhere it is loudly proclaimed that the eleven Indians of the G.G.'s Council are in virtual control of the Govt. of India.

x x x x

But all this is secondary and relatively unimportant before the horror of starving millions and people dying in the streets. Amery says that the Provincial Govts. are responsible! Not he or the Viceroy. As the *C. & M. Gazette* put it "‘death by starvation’ appears on none of the legislative lists attached to the Government of India Act and is therefore the concern neither of the Centre nor of the Provinces!"

We hardly know what is happening for, as was stated in the Assembly debate, the press has been gagged and stringent orders have been passed to prevent publication of distress conditions.

301. A Secretary to the Government of Madras was transferred to an obscure place for a letter to his wife, not received by her, from someone in which a prejudicial report about the War—within the meaning of the Defence of India Rules—was alleged to have been made.

Neogy³⁰² in his speech on the food situation described the Govt. succinctly and accurately as consisting of 'congenital idiots and confirmed knaves'.³⁰³

x x x x

Two days ago I had a letter from Indu from Panchgani. It was a depressing letter. Evidently she wants to do something useful & worthwhile and does not know what to do. This feeling of helplessness and frustration distresses.

She must be in Bombay now.

August 14, 1943

Darling,

I have your letter No. 22 of the 6th August from Panchgani. According to the provisional programme you have given you should be in Bombay now. I am sending this letter there in the hope that it will catch you there. Even if it misses you in Bombay, it will be forwarded to the right address.

Your last letter is unlike you. Perhaps the stormy and inclement weather of Panchgani depressed you, and now that you are moving about again you will feel better. There is more than enough of course all over the world and in our own country to depress and irritate. Nevertheless I do not think we have any sufficient reason to feel that way, and anyway it does no good. It is during these difficult periods that individuals and nations really find themselves and build up a strong and enduring foundation for straight thought and effective action. We begin to appreciate and understand the real values in life and to get out of the superficialities of existence. Life is a queer business at all times. We are apt to slide along it without much thinking so long as everything is normal. Or if normalcy is disturbed, we take refuge in phrases and formulae which seem to explain life and bring out the essence of its

302. K.C. Neogy (1888-1977); member, Central Legislative Assembly, 1921-34, 1942-45, 1946; Minister, Government of India, 1947-50; Chairman, Finance Commission, 1951-53; Member, Planning Commission, 1953-56.

303. In his speech on 18 August 1943, Neogy said: "I mean no disrespect to any individual member occupying the Government front bench when I say that our affairs, so far as the food situation is concerned, could not have been more mismanaged had they been entrusted to a corporation of congenital idiots and consummate knaves."

problems. They are often helpful—these phrases and formulae—but they too skim the surface of the problems and sometimes prevent us from probing down below. Perhaps it is hardly possible to probe too much and understand for, as somebody said, the only unchangeable law of life and the world is that everything changes. Still there are some anchorholds. We may not understand much in this changing world, but we can endeavour to make ourselves effective instruments for thought and action whatever might happen. To those who are really old in years the future counts for little; the present grips them and exalts or oppresses them. But by that one unchangeable law of life, the present itself changes into something different, good or bad. And in that very present lie the seeds of that future of change. The real point is: have these seeds been truly sown and are they the seeds of noble and straight-growing trees? If the seeds are there, the harvest is sure.

Even if the wider scheme of things is beyond our control, our individual selves should be amenable to our wishes, and thus through them we can even influence that wider scheme. There is an amazing amount of shouting and lying and vulgarity in modern life and this reaches a peak in war time. We are apt to be carried away by this, or, at any rate, to be powerfully affected. And yet I do not think all this shouting makes any essential difference to that scheme of things. Nature, in its widest sense, embracing humanity, carries on in accordance with its own rules and I cannot imagine that basically it is shoved out of those fundamental ways by the shouting or misbehaviour of human beings. I do think that man has made and can make an enormous difference but only by understanding the ways of nature and then using them for certain ends. That is the way of science and that should be—but unhappily is not—the way of human beings. But through folly and killing and amazing stupidity somehow the experience of the race grows and leads to more desirable results.

For my part I can truly say that I have seldom any feeling of real and abiding depression. An abounding vitality fills me and the present seems such a transitory and passing phase that my eyes almost overlook it, searching for the morrow. If I feel that way, how much more should you, with all your vital youth and the promise of the future spread out before you.

Anyway, as I have said, even if the whole world goes wrong and awry, that is no reason why we as individuals should submit to fate. Do you remember what Beethoven said, Beethoven of all men in the wide world to be stricken with the misery of deafness? "I shall seize fate by the throat. It shall never wholly overcome me."

The individual has it in him or her always to rise above the caprices of fate. Whether it is just pride or some other basic quality which stands by him, I do not know. But he can, if he so wills, stand four-square to all the winds of heaven and hell. And by doing so, he influences and turns that very fate.

If you feel depressed at any time, think that the next day you are sure to get over this—it is just a passing mood. Depression usually comes from uncertainty and doubt—what to do, what not to do? That is a difficult question to answer, especially in an affirmative way. The negative, what not to do, is easier to answer. In spite of the difficulty, however, it is better to engage oneself in some activity of mind and body, however unimportant it might appear, for thus we maintain a certain poise of mind. Not to do anything and just to brood—"the brooding sense of tragedy felt to be as much national as personal"—is not helpful at all and weakens our capacity for any effective work. It is just like being one of the unemployed who deteriorate so rapidly.

So cheer up, my dear, and let the old and the decrepit, with no vitality and no sense of the future, brood and brood.

So you are thinking of going to Jaipur. That presumably means that you will go right up to Delhi on your way back to Allahabad. It might have been worthwhile going up to Lahore from there as the journey is a relatively short one. But I do not know what the weather is like there at present and perhaps it is wiser to postpone the Lahore visit. Being cut off, I cannot really advise you. You will have all the relevant considerations before you and you can fix things up for yourself. Do not worry as to what you decide. Come to a decision and carry it out. Either way it does not matter much. Travelling and visiting have certain advantages, even in these days of overcrowded trains and extreme discomfort. They occupy the mind and prevent it from worrying.

I have Agatha's message about the tomatoes. I am sorry she thinks that I am not sufficiently appreciative of her tomatoes. Indeed I am. I think it is a feat to grow any vegetables or flowers in Albert Bridge Road. I am glad Krishna is keeping well.

When you go to Allahabad I should like you to send me two Hindi books. They are probably to be found in Anand Bhawan, though with difficulty. But it is better to send new copies as I want to give them to Mahmud. They are: *संक्षिप्त शब्द सागर*—a students' Hindi dictionary in one volume, published I think by the Indian Press and *कविता कौमुदी*³⁰⁴

304. *Kavita Kaumudi (Selected Poems)* by Ram Naresh Tripathi.

Part I only (or Volume I) by रामनरेश त्रिपाठी. This was originally published by Hindi Mandir, Allahabad. I only want Volume one.

Certainly buy the charkha. It has its undoubted merits. But long before you can get into the rhythm of it, you will find it trying and irritating. All beginnings are so.

As for khadi, I suppose we can carry on, if necessary, for two or three years with our old stocks. Get Hari to produce all my towels, bedsheets &c and use them up. Running short of a bathtowel here I managed to get a thick, rather towelish, bedsheet. This serves me excellently as a bathtowel.

Some little time ago I wrote to Amma and told her that you were likely to visit her some time later. I did not mention any particular time.

Here are two verses of Hali. They are simple and well known—often recited in honour of a valued guest, to point out the inadequacy of the host's house in comparison with the radiance of the guest.

آن کے آتے ہی یہ کیا ہو گئی گھر کی صورت
نہ وہ دیوار کی صورت ہے نہ در کی صورت

آن کو حالی بھی بلاتے ہیں گھر اپنے مہماں
(حالی) دیکھنا آپ کی اور آپ کے گھر کی صورت

In Hindi :

हाली: उनके आते ही यह क्या हो गई घर की सूरत
न वो दीवार की सूरत है न दर की सूरत—

उनको हाली भी बुलाते हैं घर अपने मेहमान
देखना आप की और आप के घर की सूरत! ³⁰⁵

I wrote to you last week and asked you to send some books as birth-day gifts to *bari Puphi* in Mussoorie. I hope you will not forget.

Love to you and Feroze—

Your loving
Papu

305. Hali: To my house she has just come;
And look, how this door and wall,
In fact, the very face of the house all is so changed!
Hali too invites her to his place;
Just look, look at him and his place!

August 21, 1943

Darling,

Your letter of August 12th from Poona reached me five days ago and later I had a letter from *Puphi* from Bombay to say that you had arrived there. She also mentioned that you were having a tooth out. Was this the old wisdom tooth which had got all twisted up and which you showed to Prakash two years ago?

If *Nani* is in Benares and likely to stay there for a while you could go and meet her there. You might also induce her to spend some time with you in Allahabad. In view of her weak health and eye trouble I think it would be desirable for you to see her as early as you conveniently can. This would please her and cheer her up. Your meeting her in Benares or Allahabad will not take the place of your visit to Lahore. That visit will have to come off some time or other.

Yes, I have read Bharati's *The Well of the People*. Normally, I seldom enjoy this type of modern poetry—there are exceptions of course. But Bharati's poem is obviously full of sincerity and power. Some lines are fine, though some drag. The imagery seems to me rather heavy, and yet it is not inappropriate, for India is herself heavy with thoughts and images of the past. I think Bharati has done very well indeed. The writing of this must have done her a lot of good. To transfer from the mind to the printed page all the thoughts and images that fill it and burden it, and to do it effectively, is an art of creation which must bring a feeling of fulfilment in its train.

Khusrau, Khusru, Khusro—are all one and the same word spelt differently. Probably the nearest approach to a correct pronunciation of the Persian name is Khusrau. The name is a common enough one. But when you say Amir Khusrau you refer only to the old songster and poet & riddle-maker.

There is, as you know, Khusru Bagh in Allahabad. This takes its name from the son of Jehangir, whose name was Khusrau and who rebelled against his father. He was imprisoned in Lahore, I think, by Jehangir and he died in prison. He is probably buried in the Allahabad garden—Khusrau was the half-brother of Khurram who became Shah Jehan.

In the early days, that is before and after the Mughals came to power in India, there was no Urdu language used as a literary vehicle. Gradually this Urdu developed as a camp and bazar language, with its basic background of Hindi and with Persian and Arabic words thrown in. In those early days people connected with the court used to write poetry

in Persian—the court language—or sometimes also in Hindi. This Hindi was what might be called pure Hindi. Thus Amir Khusrau. A later famous example was Rahim,³⁰⁶ a well-known Hindi poet of Akbar's day—Rahim or rather Abdur Rahim Khan-e-Khanan—was the son of old Bairam Khan who had been Akbar's guardian and whom Akbar pushed out as soon as he was old enough to do so. His son Abdur Rahim was a remarkable person. He was one of the biggest grandees of Akbar's court (Khan-i-Khanan was the highest title), he was a successful general, and a scholar in various languages—Persian, Arabic, Sanskrit & Hindi. He was very rich and recklessly generous. In fact he is best known today by these stories of amazing and sometimes ridiculous generosity. Having developed this reputation he was given to showing off far too much. After Akbar's death he got into trouble with Jehangir and was interned. Here is a दोहा³⁰⁷ by Rahim.

बिगरी बात बनै नहीं, लाख करो किन कोय ।
रहिमन बिगरे दूध को, भथै न माखन होय ॥³⁰⁸

Rahim was a contemporary of Tulsi Das, whom he must have known. The beginnings of literary Urdu took place in the early years of the 18th century when the great Mughal empire was fading away. Urdu, having become a spoken *melange*, was used by some bright person for some clever couplets—form and imagery Persian, language more Hindi than later. This caught on. It—the language—was called Rekhta; रेखता. To begin with this was not considered serious poetry—that was in Persian. But this vogue grew—and curiously enough as it grew it became more Persianised in language and substance. There was no prose in Urdu then (*नख्खा nasra*—prose) but only *नज़्म nazm*—poetry—Prose came slowly in the early 19th century.

The early Urdu *नज़्म* is full of Hindi words and Hindi and even देहाती³⁰⁹ endings—These drop out later. Here is a simple couplet of an early Urdu poet—Mazhar—Mirza Jan-e-Janan:³¹⁰

یہ حسرت رہ گئی کیا کیا مزے سے زندگی کرتے
اگر होता چمن اپنا، گل اپنا، باغباں اپنا (مظہر جان جاناں)

306. Abdur Rahim Khan Khana (1556-1626).

307. *Doh* —a couplet.

308. Rahim: Honour once lost is never gained.

Howsoever one may try;

Milk turned sour, O *Rahiman*, butter does not make
however much you may churn!

309. *Dehati*—rural.

310. Mazhar Jan-e-Janan (1699-1781).



MEN AND ANIMALS COLLECT CABBAGE FOR FOOD, 1943



STARVING WOMEN AND CHILDREN, 1943

यह हसरत रह गई क्या क्या मजे से खिन्दगी करते
अगर होता चमन अपना, गुल अपना, बागवान अपना³¹¹

चमन=garden; बागवान=gardener

Here is a clever couplet (of later days by a poet whose name I do not remember) with sarcasm in it:

یہ عجب میں رسم دیکھی کہ بروز عید قرباں
وہی ذبح بھی کرے ہے وہی لے ثواب آٹا
(مصحفی)

In Hindi:

यह अजब मैं रस्म देखी के बरोज़-ए-ईद-ए-कुर्बान
वही जिबेह भी करे है, वही ले सवाब उल्टा!³¹²

The form of words is somewhat archaic.

ईद-ए-कुर्बान is बक्रीद when animal sacrifices take place.

Tell Betty I have received her letter of the 14th and the *rakhi*. Also that I got the Delhi sweets she sent. If you are not in Bombay when you get this, do not trouble to write about this to her. I have just received the Oxford book of quotations—a very sumptuous book indeed. Thank Betty.

Love

Your loving
Papu

August 28, 1943

Darling Indu,

I have not had a letter from you for quite a number of days—twelve I think. And even your last letter was a brief note from Poona. Betty informed me of your arrival in Bombay and your intention to have a tooth out. I hope this did not lead to any trouble. According to your programme you should have left Bombay and gone to Jaipur. But I think it is safer to send this to Bombay, unless I hear from you to the contrary by today's post.

311. Mazhar Jan-e-Janan: This desire of ours, alas, remained unfulfilled
What a life it would've been
If ours were the gardener,
ours the garden, and ours the rose!

312. Funny are the ways of this world;
Look, he who kills on the Festive Day.
He gets the reward too!

Betty sent me a *rakhi* for *Raksha-bandhan* and a sumptuous book—*The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. This book is a delightful companion. Betty inscribed it *Bhaiya Dooj* although this day is still three months off. A mistake for *Raksha-bandhan*.

In my last letter sent to Amma (to Lahore) I asked her to send me some *supari* (भुनी सुपारी with इलाची) as she has sometimes sent me previously. Having written to her, I regretted it, for this meant giving her trouble. With her weak health and poor eye-sight, preparing this might well become a burden to her. It would be better if she asked Bappi or someone else to prepare it.

When you go to Allahabad do not forget to send me one or more good snap shots of Mummy and the one of yourself you mentioned in a letter.

About two years ago or less I invested some money in khadi production. This was in the form of a loan advanced to the Gandhi Ashram at Meerut. I understand that this money was returned to Bachhraj some time last year as khadi centres were not functioning. I do not exactly know what happened but I suppose the Bachhraj Company credited the amount to my account and cancelled the loan. I am told that efforts are now being made to extend khadi work and especially production. If so, you can authorize Bachhraj to re-invest my money in it in the form of a loan, if they are satisfied that it will be properly utilised.

News of starvation and death in Bengal and Orissa is so harrowing that one feels sick of heart.³¹³ I want you to know that you can draw upon my account to any extent you like (subject only to the extent of the account) for any effective help that you can envisage. It is the fate of the children and the young boys and girls that upsets me.

What the position is in Allahabad and roundabout I do not know. Probably it is much better than in Bengal, and yet it cannot be good. In this matter, however, no geographical lines can be drawn, though, inevitably, the suffering neighbour has first attention.

I need hardly say that you should not mention my name in this connection, even if you draw upon my account for the purpose.

Here are three couplets of Insha³¹⁴— इश्ता—

کمر باندھے ہوئے چلنے کو یاں سب یار بیٹھے ہیں
بہت آگے گئے، باقی جو ہیں تیار بیٹھے ہیں

313. Twenty-four lines were blacked out by the censor.

314. Insha-u-llah Khan Insha (d. 1817).

نہ جھڑ اے نکھت باد بہاری راہ لگ اپنی
 تجھے اٹھکیلیاں سوچھی ہیں ہم بیزار بیٹھے ہیں
 بھلا گردش فلک کی چین دیتی ہے کسے انشا
 غنیمت ہے کہ ہم صورت یہاں دو چار بیٹھے ہیں (انشا)

The first couplet is easy. In the third *فلک* means the sky. *گردش* means turning, movement. *گردش-فلک* is a common phrase meaning the way of this world, the march of time and fate.

In the second couplet there are a number of words you are not likely to know. *نکھت* = *خوشبू*; *باد* = breeze, wind; *باد-بہاری* = spring breeze; *इटकहेलियां* (a good word) = frolic = *खुशी के खेल*.
 In Hindi :

इन्शा : कमर बांधे हुए चलने को यां सब यार बैठे हैं ।
 बहुत आगे गए, बाकी जो हैं तैयार बैठे हैं ॥
 न छेड़ ऐ नकहत-ए-बाद-ए-बहारी राह लग अपनी ।
 तुझे इटकहेलियां सूझी हैं, हम बेजार बैठे हैं ॥
 भला गर्दिश फलक की चैन देती है किसे इन्शा ।
 गनीमत है कि हम-सूरत यहां³¹⁵ दो चार बैठे हैं ॥³¹⁶

This is my letter No. 25 to you.

Later :

I have just received your letter from Bombay dated Aug. 21st, also a letter from Betty dated 24/8 and a note from Amma from Benares. Amma complains she has not heard from you for a long time. Tell Betty I shall write to her on Tuesday next. *Tai's rakhi* has also come with the card. I propose to send my next letter to you to Allahabad.

Love

Your loving
 Papu

315. The source however has "हम सोहबत."

316. Insha: All those assembled here are
 On their way to go;
 Many, many gone before,
 Others are on their way!
 Ye fragrant Spring breeze,
 Blow your wanton way;
 Pestered here we are
 Frolicking and you do play;
 But, tease us not, so we say;
 O Insha, the ceaseless round of heavens
 Spares no one easy here;
 A blessing it is, indeed, that a few of us
 Co-destined are together here!

August 30, Monday

More than two weeks since I wrote in this book. Two dull and depressing weeks. Such moods, I suppose, come and go. There is little reason behind them. And yet there is reason enough for depression at the world's state, and India's.

I have been feeling less energetic than usual. Whatever the cause, one of the results has been loss of weight. In two weeks I lost 4 pounds over and above my previous loss. I am now 128 pounds which is my lowest for some years.

It is not the weather. Partly, I think, it is due to the reaction to the stories of starvation and death in Bengal. A few thousand deaths by starvation are bad enough—probably the number is much greater for we get news from the cities only and that is scrappy and incomplete. But to think of millions not dying off quickly but slowly starving away, emaciated, stunted children, young boys and girls becoming thinner & thinner—a whole generation passing through this crisis—this is horror. Some pictures of these starving wretches, well-built girls fainting through sheer hunger and fatigue, little children with their ribs and bones sticking out, sometimes vainly trying to suckle from the dried up breasts of their dying mothers, have haunted me ever since I saw them.

Death one can stand and even deliberate cruelty and suffering on a vast scale are common enough in this war. What can be more horrible than what has happened in Russia since the German invasion? And yet there is something peculiarly shocking in this widespread starvation in large parts of India. This is not caused by war directly. It is man-made.

x x x x

Indu, evidently, has been in the dumps also. It really must be more difficult outside than in prison. For here there is no choice and outside there must always be the urge to do something—yes, but what? Feroze is likely to go back to prison, so Indu hints. Meanwhile, both have gone to Allahabad.

x x x x

Today I have taken out my old charkha and dusted and oiled it. I have not used it for a year and a quarter. I want to start it again, but will the mood continue?

31-8-43

Darling Betty,

Both your letters have reached me—the one dated 18th Aug. came just after I had written to you, and the later one dated 24th Aug. came three days ago. Thank you for the *rakhi*. The *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* has also arrived. It is really a delightful companion, an ideal gift at any time, more specially in prison. In inscribing this book you have got a little mixed up. You have written *Bhaiya Dooj* instead of *Raksha-bandhan*! *Bhaiya Dooj* is still far off.

I am sending you for Raja, four issues of *Amerasia* and one of *Pacific Affairs*. These will interest him. Also a copy of *Life*.

You ask about the health or rather the ill-health of Sardar and Mahmud. I suppose I had better not discuss the subject of my companions' health as this is not approved of by the censors. Health and ill-health keep up a precarious balance and the pans go up and down. My own weight of course goes on the side of health and I make up a little for the deficiencies of some of the others.

Indu and Feroze are, I suppose, in Allahabad now.

Send my love to Raja. My love to you.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

Sept. 4, 1943

Darling Indu,

I had finished my last letter to you when your letter of the 21st August (your number 24th) was given to me. I read it at first rather hurriedly as I wanted to find out where to address my letter. For no reason at all I became a little confused and I was on the point of sending my letter to Bombay. I recovered just in time, but the postscript I wrote bears traces of this confusion. You had written quite clearly about your programme; it was only my vagrant mind that made the mistake.

So now you must be in Allahabad, or perhaps in Benares with Amma. Give my love to her and tell her that I have written to her twice recently—on July 20th and August 11th. Yet she complains of not having received any reply from me to her letters. Both the letters were sent to Lahore C/o Chand. The second one probably missed her in Lahore

as she had gone to Benares. But the first should certainly have reached her before she left. These Hindi letters evidently take longer to reach their destinations.

The books you sent have reached me—all those mentioned in your letter plus the *China Handbook*.³¹⁷ It is a good and attractive selection. Mahmud is excited about the books on improving eye-sight.

I have sent you to Allahabad the following books:

- 1 *Banking & Finance in China* by Tamagna
 - 2 *Economic Development of the Netherland Indies*
 - 3 *Ambassador Dodd's Diary*
 - 4 J.B.S. Haldane: *Heredity & Politics*
 - 5 Eddington: *Nature of the Physical World*
 - 6 Gibbs: *America Speaks*
 - 7 Ela Sen: *Wives of Famous Men*
 - 8 Ben-Shalom: *Deep Furrows*
 - 9 M. Thein Pe: *What Happened in Burma*
 - 10 Alvah Bessie: *This is your Enemy*
 - 11 Winwood Reade: *The Outcast*
 - 12 Adrienne Moore: *Interviewing Japan*
- and some old foreign periodicals.

Tell *Puphi* (if you are anywhere near her) that I have received the copy of Chand's letter from New York which she sent me. I read it with great interest.

Tell *Puphi* also that I have been thinking further about the question of fixing on someone to advise Chand and Tara about holiday &c. The Wellesley people want to know who to deal with. I suggested Pearl Buck's name in my last letter to *Puphi*. I think now that two names should be mentioned: Pearl Buck and Frances Gunther. As Frances has done such a lot for the girls, it will look ungraceful to leave her out. Of course it is a little absurd to fix responsibility on two persons. That may be illogical and all that but it is good enough for the time being. *Puphi* can observe the reactions to this and later take some other and more definite step if she considers it necessary. It is not easy for me to advise as I have not all the facts. She must act as she thinks best and not mind at all if she has to go contrary to my suggestions. I shall write to her early next week.

I have definitely begun spinning—so I hope your *punis* will be coming soon. I have two or three weeks supply with me.

317. A survey of major developments in China between 1937 and 1943 compiled by the Chinese Ministry of Information.

I have exhausted this kind of notepaper on which I am writing. Next time probably I shall be reduced to thin foolscap paper. That will not be a great disaster and yet I should like to indulge myself in the small luxury of good notepaper, if it is easily available. I like the stuff I got from Dehra Dun—the hand-made greyish paper as well as the cream, especially the former. You must have finished this up. Why not try to get some more? The address is: Paper-making Department, Forest Research Institute, Dehra Dun. Send a sample of the big size grey paper. I do not fancy small sizes. Get a supply for yourself and *Puphi*. But if there is any difficulty do not bother.

I read with great interest your musings on philosophy. It is perhaps early for you to philosophize, and yet it is inevitable when the harsh facts of existence thrust themselves upon us. I have dipped into all manner of books on philosophy and science—from the *Upanishads* and Plato and Indian and Greek philosophy to many of the modern expositions and inquiries. It is a fascinating subject opening out innumerable avenues of thought, and yet it seems to lead nowhere. At any rate I do not think I am much wiser. Perhaps layer upon layer of their thoughts accumulate in the mind and give a certain depth. But my tendency is to turn away from metaphysical speculations. But no thoughtful person, however scientific he claims to be, can entirely turn away from some aspect of metaphysics, or let us call it the, for the present, unknown, if not unknowable. One simply must seek and inquire and delve deep—the Faustian attitude—whatever the consequences. (I am reading Faust again.) Recently I read Nietzsche. I remember reading him rather carelessly when I was in Cambridge. I dislike his fundamental thesis,³¹⁸ but there is much that is attractive in what he says, or perhaps it is the manner of saying it that fixes the attention.

We come back after all to a certain pragmatic attitude. I think you are perfectly right in saying that our main trouble is a lack of organic connection with nature or life. We have gone off at a tangent from the circle of life, uprooted ourselves and thus lost the sense of fullness and coordination with nature. A peasant, at his very low level of living on the soil and for the soil, has that sense of organic connection. Hence, I suppose, his extraordinary tenacity and perseverance. But his level of existence is terribly low, and most of us had rather be uprooted than exist at that level. To live at a high level and yet to have that organic

318. Nietzsche believed that good and evil were only relative, there was one morality for the vigorous, efficient man and another for the weak, average subordinate man and that Christianity was a slave's religion.

connection with life—that I suppose is the problem humanity is trying to solve now in its own crude, cruel and wasteful way.

Why does one do anything? Hardly because of reasoned thinking, though this may be behind the immediate urge to some extent. It is this urge, this impulse, overmastering and uncontrollable, that drives one on. Our moods depend even less on reason and the smallest things affect them, exalting them or depressing them. Often one forgets or hardly remembers the cause for this exaltation or depression, yet the mood prevails. I have felt sometimes extraordinarily exhilarated by the sight of a sunset sky, or the deep blue patch between the monsoon clouds, or even a flower which I had missed and have suddenly seen. For a moment I have felt at one with nature.

Why does one act? Impossible to answer unless one goes down deep into the depths of the unconscious self of man, a journey which is beyond our capacity. We may at best just glimpse into those depths and return mystified. Have you seen those lovely lines by Yeats on an Irish airman?³¹⁹

Nor law, nor duty bade me fight
Nor public men, nor cheering crowds,
A lovely impulse of delight
Drove to this tumult of the clouds.
I balanced all, brought all to mind,
The years to come seemed waste of breath,
A waste of breath the years behind
In balance with this life, this death.

I have been reading Virginia Woolf³²⁰ (*To the Lighthouse*). The more I read her the more I like her. There is a magic about her writing, something ethereal, limpid like running water, and deep like a clear mountain lake. What is her book about? So very little that you can tell any one; and yet so much that it fills your mind, covers it with a gossamer wet, out of which you peer at the past, at yourself, at others. Did you ever meet her?

Here are two Urdu couplets—one by Amir, the other by Ghalib—
विसाल means union (with the loved one). बू=smell, fragrance; नाला=सदाएं,
आवाजें; दूद (Persian)=smoke धुआं; बरस=assembly.

شب وصال بہت کم ہے آسمان سے کہو
کہ جوڑ دے کوئی ٹکڑا شب جدائی کا
(امیر)

319. "An Irish Airman Foresees His Death"; Yeats wrote this poem as a memorial on the death of the only son of his friend, Lady Gregory; he was shot down on active service in Italy in 1918.

320. Virginia Woolf (1882-1941); English novelist and essayist.

In Hindi:

अमीर : शब-ए-विसाल बहुत कम है, आस्मां से कहो,
के जोड़ दे कोई टुकड़ा, शब-ए-जुदाई का ! ³²¹

बूँ गल, नालुं دل, दूद چراغ محفل
(غالب) جو تری بزم سے نکلا، سو پریشان نکلا !

ग़ालिब : बू-ए-गुल, नाल-ए-दिल, दूद-ए-चिराग-ए-महफिल,
जो तेरी बज़म से निकला सो परीशान निकला ! ³²²

The night of separation is a long, long one; the night of union much too short. Why not add a bit, says Amir, from one to the other. There is a nostalgia of the immediate past (and possibly of remoter periods) in Ghalib's lines.

Will you ask *Puphi* to send me some news from time to time of Tajo.³²³ Keep in touch with her. I hope she is doing well in I. T. College.

I notice that Sharma is out.

Love,

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 26.

September 5. Sunday

This evening we saw a magnificent rainbow—or rather two of them. I have never seen a finer rainbow. It arched almost exactly over our yard and seemed like an enormous fairy arch inviting us to march through. The colours were distinct and bright, fading off into each other. For nearly ten minutes it lasted in all its glory.

321. Amir: How so short is this night of union!
Pray, let the heavens add to it
A part of the night
When separate we had to live!

322. Ghalib: Rose's fragrance, heart's plaintive cry,
the smoke of thy assembly's lamp;
Whosoever left thy company
came out upset and broke!

323. Mehr Taj.

We have been having plenty of rain during the last five or six days—It was badly needed, not only by our little garden but, what is far more important, for the fields. Next crop is partly saved.

x

x

x

x

News, ghastly news, of starvation and death continued to come from Bengal and elsewhere. On behalf of the Govt. it was stated in the Council of State that it was very wrong to 'dramatise' this situation. To describe starving and dying people is too dramatic. It makes comfortable people feel uncomfortable and thus of course interferes with the war effort of the comfortable people. To criticise Govt. for its terrible inefficiency and mishandling of the food situation is to import 'politics' in a grave situation, to impede their noble efforts at relief and indirectly to aid the enemy. So criticisms—like one³²⁴ by Shyama Prasad Mookerji—have been suppressed by the censor.

Govt. objects to strong criticism. And yet the criticism has been mild to a degree compared to what it might have been, what it should have been, what I have felt consuming me. There is, at last, some feeling in the country. People have been roused by the stark horror of Bengal's plight. And yet the language used is 'statesmanlike', 'parliamentary', moderate. It is hell in Bengal, and something of the fire of hell should have enveloped the words and phrases used in describing it.

Whose fault has this been? I do not know. But nothing is more ridiculous and scandalous than to say that profiteers and their like have caused all this. There are profiteers everywhere and carrion who feed on human flesh. Hang them by all means. But a Govt., which permits this kind of thing to happen and cannot prevent it or deal with it effectively, is responsible and must be made to pay for it. Are our people—barring the hundred thousand or so aggressive Congressmen—cowards who dare not raise their heads and voices even when this kind of thing happens?

Who is responsible? The Viceroy?—the Government of India?—the Indian members of the G.G.'s Council?—The Governor of Bengal?—

324. In August 1943, S.P. Mookerji made a statement to the press which, though passed for publication in a modified form by the Press Adviser in Calcutta, was banned by the Chief Press Adviser in Delhi as objectionable from the security point of view and as primarily designed to exploit the food situation for party ends. In this statement Mookerji asked the Bengal Ministry to "quit honourably" and accused the British "of hiding behind the Provincial Government after having reduced the people of Bengal to starvation."

The Civil Service & Secretariat of Bengal?—Nazimuddin's³²⁵ present Cabinet in Bengal? Fazlul Huq's previous Cabinet? I cannot apportion this blame. Probably all are to blame. An inefficient, self-centred, selfish lot put in high places without capacity or idealism or vision.

If there was ever a need for a thorough public inquiry—it is now in this Bengal disaster. Not just now perhaps but as soon as possible. Every one at all responsible should be impeached and punished and swept out of public life & responsible positions.

But no, they will continue—for some time at least—they, the British Govt. in India and their underlings, for the sword is the final arbiter and the Britisher holds the sword, and many of our men suck up to him and lick his spittle and fawn and betray.

x x x x

I have begun spinning—from Sept. 1st, half an hour or so a day. I was surprised and pleased at the ease with which I took to it again after a year and a half.

x x x x

Nan sent me a copy of a long letter from Chand from New York. This was very interesting reading. My mind jumped into the future and tried to see Chand & Tara three or four years hence. What would they be like then? How will this great change affect them? It is evident that they are bowled over by what they have been seeing—

x x x x

Indu is evidently growing mentally, a painful process. The past year of shock and change—and almost immediately after her marriage!—has left its powerful impress upon her. And worse, the uncertainty, the darkness ahead—To what end is all this? Is there a way out?

Then there is the probability of Feroze going back to prison, and Indu herself fretting at inactivity.

She has gone to Allahabad.

325. Khwaja Nazimuddin (1894-1964); Chief Minister of Bengal, 1943-45; Chief Minister of East Pakistan, 1947; Governor-General of Pakistan, 1948-51; Prime Minister of Pakistan, 1951-53.

September 11, 1943

Darling Indu,

It seems quite a long time since I heard from you. Your last letter dated 21st August reached me two weeks ago. A longer interval than usual was inevitable because of your return to Allahabad. Perhaps you went to Benares from there to see Amma.

I have had a letter from Amma from Benares. She has received one of my letters to her. Surprisingly—and yet why be surprised?—she says that part of this letter was blacked out. You can imagine what I can write to Amma of all persons. How any of the purely domestic matters concerning various people's health outside should offend the sensitive judgment of the censor it is a little difficult to imagine.

Amma writes that Chand has taken two months' leave and has gone to Murree. Also that there is a chance of Kailas and Sheila returning from London. I suppose the new developments in the war situation will facilitate this return.

Yesterday's newspaper brought the interesting news that Feroze had been acquitted in appeal.³²⁶ Of course it is a minor matter that he had already served his full sentence of a year.

We have been having an abundance of rain during the last two weeks or so. Our little garden has revived and puts up a brave show. But far more important than the flowers in the garden are the crops outside and this rain has probably averted another tragedy.

When you were in Naini, or just after your release, I sent you a packet of flower seeds. We have collected masses of these seeds, rather indiscriminately I am afraid. Would you like me to send you some more for Anand Bhawan or elsewhere?

I liked the book you sent me—Han Sayin's autobiography: *Destination Chungking*.³²⁷ It is very well written; her prose is clear and limpid and runs effortlessly. The descriptions of Chinese life during the war, and more particularly of the bombing of Chungking, are vivid. I thought again and again of what I had seen in Chungking four years ago and more, of the nightly air raids and of the Japanese bombers shining

326. On 8 September 1943, Feroze Gandhi, who had been sentenced to one year's imprisonment, was acquitted on the ground that "the accused was not given sufficient opportunity for defence".

327. This autobiography deals with the author's personal life and also provides an account of Chinese life during the years of war and social dislocation.

brightly and looking beautiful as they were caught in the beam of the searchlight. Do you know the 'Epitaph' by C. S. Lewis?³²⁸

She was delicately, beautifully made,

So small, so unafraid,

Till the bomb came

(Bombs are the same

Delicately, beautifully made).

Nightly they came, these shining, beautiful bombers, and the alarm shrieked out and we rushed into the shelters, peeping out sometimes to look at the planes far over us and the searchlights and the falling bombs. The next morning we inspected the craters and the debris covering what once were human beings.

This was four years ago and what a lot has happened since then. The bombers and the bombs, unusual sights, somethings that only occurred in far away and backward countries like Abyssinia, China and Spain, are now the commonest of experiences for half the world at least.

And yet, sometimes, these four years seem to vanish away, as if they had not been, and I am back again in Chungking and Barcelona and Prague and Geneva, full of the excitement of the moment, full of anger at the folly and weakness of man.

It is an odd experience to go back to the past and live it again, almost forgetting the events that followed. Sometimes the old excitement returns in some measure, the joy and the pain, and then there is the sudden switch-back to the present and it takes a little time to adapt oneself to it. As if we had visited a theatre and seen a powerful play which gripped us, and in which, curiously enough, we were both actors and spectators. The play ends and we walk out into the cool night air, but our minds are still wrapped up in what we have seen and there is a veil before our eyes. Gradually it fades away and we are back to the present.

In prison, I imagine, this kind of mental throw-back occurs more frequently than outside. In the present here is still and stagnant and, lacking sensation, the mind searches for it in the pigeon-holes of memory.

My weekly Urdu verses will take the form of a story today. The verses, by themselves, are not particularly noteworthy but the incident, out of which they arose, give them some significance. Mir Taqi was a resident of Delhi which was the centre of the new language, Urdu, and where Urdu poets gathered in, their *mushairas*. Indeed they claimed

328. (1898-1963); English literary critic, novelist, and writer of essays on Christian, theological and moral problems. The epitaph was written at the time when London was bombed. It was published in *Time and Tide* in June 1942.

that no one could master Urdu unless he lived in Delhi or nearby. But Delhi faded away just as the shadowy Mughal emperor, sitting in the fort, faded away. Lucknow, under the *Nawab Viziers*, had a brief period of local glory. Starving poets and poetasters migrated from Delhi to Lucknow and often found shelter and support there.

So Mir Taqi, who was a very proud and sensitive individual, difficult to get on with, decided to quit Delhi and journeyed to Lucknow. Arriving there, he heard that there was a *mushaira* that very evening. He went there in very peculiar old-fashioned clothes which he used to wear. No one knew him and his entry created a sensation. The young Lucknow wits, as is their way, made fun of him. Then someone asked him who he was, where he came from. He answered in verse made up on the occasion:

کیا بود و باش پوچھو ہو پورب کے ساکنو
ہم کو غریب جان کے ہنس ہنس پکار کے
دلی جو ایک شہر تھا عالم میں انتخاب
رہتے تھے منتخب ہی جہاں روزگار کے
اس کو فلک نے لوٹ کے ویران کر دیا
ہم رہنے والے ہیں اسی اجڑے دیار کے

मीर तक़ी :

क्या बूद-ओ-बाश पूछो हो पूरब के साकिनों । हम को गरीब जान के हंस हंस पुकार के ॥
दिल्ली जो एक शहर था आलम में इतेखाब । रहते थे मुन्तख़ब ही जहाँ रोज़गार के ॥
इस को फ़लक ने लूट के वीरान कर दिया । हम रहने वाले हैं उसी उजड़े द्यार के ॥³²⁹

बूद-ओ-बाश = रहना-सहना; साकिनों = रहने वाले; इतेखाब = चुना हुआ; मुन्तख़ब = चुना हुआ, selected, chosen; फ़लक = sky—hence fate; द्यार = place.

I have just received your letter of Sept. 4th from Allahabad. I am sorry to learn of *Nani's* weak health and bad eye-sight. Possibly later she might be able to come to Allahabad—for rest of course. Two lines of your letter, after your reference to Yunus, have suffered the black-out.

Your description of Malaviyaji's pathetic condition makes me sad. And yet such things must be expected. He is now 82 and for India that

329. Mir Taqi : O ye natives of eastern region,
Me a stranger here,
So with laugh and jest ye ask my place;
Delhi, the city select in world
Where there lived the chosen few;
That city, alas, the heavens ruined it all;
From that deserted place I do hail

is a good age. If you can manage to send my *namaskar* and affectionate homage to him, do so.

I do not mind at all your sending my opinion to Bharati about her book.

I think there is some mistake about the शब्द सागर.³³⁰ There is no doubt that a small Hindi dictionary (a little smaller than the *Oxford Concise*) is out. I had it at Dehra Dun and you will find it probably in my room. Possibly some other publisher has brought it out. Perhaps also the name is different.

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 27.

September 18, 1943

Darling Indu,

September is gradually creeping away and the days get shorter, the weather cooler. But our routine continues much the same; there is little of novelty in it. Only the mind occasionally rebels and wanders far afield, forgetting for a while the present with all its drabness and monotony. Latterly, as I wrote to you, I have taken afresh to spinning and I was pleased to find that my fingers had not lost their skill. I spin fairly well and fast but for only half an hour a day or so. And in half an hour not much can be produced; possibly in four or five days of half hours I spin enough yarn to make a pocket handkerchief!

I wrote to Amma a few days ago. As Kailas and Sheila are trying to come back—and they might well succeed—it struck me that perhaps they might be short of funds for the return journey from England. If so, and I asked Amma to inquire from Kailas, we might try to send them some money.

I have been looking through the two books on improving eye-sight that you sent us. They are very helpful and contain useful suggestions for simple exercises. I think these exercises would do you good, even though your eyes are in excellent condition. Some neck exercises are also worth doing as these relieve the stiffness & tension in the neck and

³³⁰. *Shabda Sagar*.

thereby help circulation and prevent, to some extent, headaches. All this does not take more than five minutes. I remember how Dhan Gopal Mukerji used to relieve headaches by gentle massage of the neck muscles.

I have had no news of *Puphi* (Nan) for some time and am not sure where she is. Probably she is back in Allahabad but there was no mention of her in your letter.

This is another reminder to you to send me snaps of Mummy and yourself.

Please get Hari and Khaliq³³¹ to clean up all the books in the library and in my room. They get all musty during the rains.

Here are two simple Urdu couplets of Mir:

جی میں تھا اس سے ملیے تو کیا کیا نہ کہیے میر
(میر) پر جب ملے تو رہ گئے ناچار دیکھ کر !

یاد اس کی اتنی خوب نہیں میر باز آ
(میر) نادان پھر وہ دل سے بھلایا نہ جائے گا

मीर : जी में था उस से मिलिये तो क्या क्या न कहिये मीर
पर जब मिले तो रह गए नाचार देख कर !

याद उस की इतनी खूब नहीं मीर, बाज आ
नादान ! फिर वह दिल से भुलाया न जाएगा³³²

Do you want me to continue sending you Urdu verses in my letters? It is no trouble to me but I do not want to burden you with them unless you are interested. They are not—far from it!—high class poetry. But they help us to understand a certain phase of India and of our people. And they enrich our knowledge of the language.

Love to you and Feroze—

Your loving
Papu

331. A chauffeur in Anand Bhawan.

332. Mir : Much I thought if ever her I met
I would say this and this and this;
But look, when I met her
I looked and looked at her
And nothing I could say!
Remembrance of hers, much, too much, O Mir,
Will not be good for you;
Contain yourself, so I say;
You do not know, perhaps,
So enduring will it be one day
That you can ne'er defy!

In your letter dated Sept. 4 from Allahabad, you say it is your No. 26. According to my calculation it is No. 25. The one before was dated 21st August from Bombay.

This letter is my No. 28.

P

Sept. 21. Tuesday

A long interval since I wrote in this journal last. My mind has been agitated and sometimes depressed. Several times I pulled this book out intending to write in it, and then refrained from doing so. I have not been keeping very fit either—though nothing much is the matter with me. A vague malaise, more mental than physical. I had a slight temperature two days ago—Abstinence from food, more or less, because of this, brought my weight down to 126 pounds today. This is, I think, my lowest weight during the last dozen years or more. I have gone back to 1930.

The Supdt. threatened me with a tonic. As if a tonic is the remedy for mental worries and bad food.

x x x x

Indu's letters have come irregularly from Allahabad—a later one sometimes coming earlier. Also, it appears, that my letters have suffered considerable black-outs. Others complain of this also. Perhaps there is a new and more eagle-eyed censor.

x x x x

Indu is in Allahabad. She wanted to go to Bengal but Swami Abhayanandji of the Belur *math* advised her not to come. He said there were quite enough workers there—What was needed was food, clothing, money.

Nan is probably going to Calcutta on behalf of the Women's Conference.³³³

x x x x

333. Vijayalakshmi Pandit, who was the president of the All India Women's Conference, visited Bengal in October-November 1943 to help the women of Bengal open orphanages and take other relief measures.

Reports from Bengal are staggering. We grow accustomed to anything, any depth of human misery and sorrow. And so we grow accustomed to starvation and death daily in Bengal. The first keen edge of horrified amazement is gone. But a dull horror remains and colours everything. More and more I feel that behind all the terrible mismanagement and bungling—Central Government's & Provincial Govt.'s—there is something deeper. It is the collapse of the economic structure of Bengal—a social breakdown. If so, not all the relief works and remedial measures will end this trouble. It will grow and like a poisonous growth affect other parts of India. Indeed Orissa³³⁴ and parts of Madras³³⁵ are affected.

References have appeared in the press that expert observers (foreign) after a careful study of conditions in Bengal had predicted a terrible famine somewhere in 1944 or 1945. This was before the war. The war of course has accelerated the pace of events.

I remember our discussing the agrarian situation in Bengal and elsewhere before the war as well as soon after its commencement with several people. We agreed that some time or other, unless radical remedies were resorted to, a volcano would burst. But it was all rather vague, theoretic. I imagined, however, that the war, with its higher prices for agricultural produce, would ease the situation for a while. Perhaps in the later years of the war the strain would tell. In the Punjab, in Sind & parts of the U.P. probably the agriculturists are better off in some ways owing to war prices. But not so in Bengal & elsewhere.

Or possibly, and even probably, it is the class of landless labourers and the lower middle class that is chiefly affected.

Side by side with this starvation and death are reports of fantastic profits in the textile & jute mills and all war industries. After paying very high super-taxes, and extravagant expenditure on improvements, sometimes over 100% profit has been made in the course of a year!³³⁶ What a social and economic system we have to permit this and at the same time to have famine on a vast scale. The profit makers give donations for relief and are lauded for their generosity.

x

x

x

x

334. On 7 September 1943, the Chief Secretary to the Government of Orissa stated that 332 deaths occurred in Ganjam district due to food shortage since the middle of May 1943.

335. Newspapers reported that over 50,000 people in the Ceded Districts of Madras Presidency were facing starvation.

336. The rise in prices of textile and jute goods to five times the pre-war level resulted in vast profits to owners of cloth and jute mills.

The latest figures are considerably over 2000 deaths from starvation in Calcutta alone—mostly among destitute persons coming from outside—during the past six weeks. That is an average of nearly 50 a day of reported cases. If that is so in Calcutta, is it unreasonable to fix 250 a day for the whole of Bengal? Probably this is a gross underestimate. At that rate 10000 persons have died from starvation in Bengal during the past six weeks. There must be tens of thousands of others who have been broken up by semi-starvation and who hang on the verge of life.

And in other provinces—Orissa, Madras?

The Statesman today mentioned the case of a baby one year old who looked like an old man! He died. The hospital refused to take him although it was prepared to take his mother and two brothers or sisters. The mother refused to part with the baby and went back in despair. The baby died—the brothers & sisters & the mother are also likely to die.

X X X X

The stories that come through—and probably very few come through as there is the censor—are ghastly beyond words. Are we to become a nation of starving beggars? Two worlds—the profiteers and the beggars—and above them both the major profiteers, the British Govt. and all its underlings.

X X X X

It is obvious that all news of starvation and death and corpses in the streets is strictly censored and not allowed to go out of India. *The Statesman* and other papers have commented on this.³³⁷ There has so far been no adequate comment in the foreign press. Some homilies in the English press about food scarcity and our failings. But they will know one day, the world will know. Meanwhile, we know.

X X X X

337. *The Statesman* of 12 September 1943 stated: "We regret we are unable to publish statistics regarding cases of starvation admitted in the Calcutta hospitals or similar information illustrating effects of the Province's food shortage. We were informed by the Director of Public Information, Government of Bengal, who has been issuing figures lately, that the question of continuing the issue of these figures daily is engaging the attention of the Government and, pending decision, they have stopped supplying their figures to the press."

Some debates in the Bengal Assembly have distressed me—The old wrangling, the old invectives, the old thesis, the old animosities—although people die daily in their scores and hundreds in the streets. Shyama Prasad Mookerji has risen in stature.³³⁸ All others seem to be insufferable pygmies.

X

X

X

X

The Pakistan business—often my thoughts have turned to it. How mad and foolish it is; how fantastic from any economic point of view. It means ruin industrially for the Pakistan area. The rest would not be greatly affected. And yet there it is: mad and foolish and fantastic and criminal and all that, and yet a huge barrier to all progress. What a lot Jinnah & his Muslim League have to answer for! They have lowered the whole tone of our public life, embittered it, increased mutual dislikes and hatreds, and made us contemptible before the outside world. I cannot help thinking that ultimately the Muslims in India will suffer most.

But is it any good cursing others? They have misbehaved and betrayed the cause of our country and freedom! Agreed—What then? It is not good enough to analyse a situation in this way. Why did we permit them to do so? True the British Govt. helped them and created the conditions under which they flourish. That too is not enough!

There must have been, must be, something wrong with our thinking. To blame others is never good enough.

It is getting late and I am keeping up Mahmud. This argument can be continued some time later. It is too long for this late hour.

Sept. 24. Thursday

Yesterday I had two letters from Indu—old ones coming out of turn and with blacked out patches. Indu also says that my letters to her were blacked out in parts, apparently those relating to Bengal. Bengal is a sore point, no wonder.

338. This is a reference to a speech of S.P. Mookerji in the Bengal Assembly: "We have no confidence in the ability, integrity and honesty of this Ministry.... It is not nature's hand alone that is dealing Bengal a deathblow. Political maladministration lies at the root of the present catastrophe. No lasting solution can come until India is economically and politically free."

At last some news of starvation and death in Bengal has reached foreign countries, at least London. A moderate reaction.

Sept. 25. 1943

Darling Indu,

I have a sheaf of your letters in front of me. Three of them have come during the last week and they have cleared up a mystery and confusion that intrigued me previously. Your numbering of your letters seemed to me wrong, some of your references were not clear, and it was obvious that something was lacking. This could have been due to the blacked-out passages in your letters for they create a gap in understanding. But it was not that alone. Your letters reached me irregularly, in inverted order, sometimes a long while without any, and then in a bunch. Thus your letter of August 29th came to me on Sept. 20th after I had received your letter of the 4th Sept. Again your letter of the 13th Sept. preceded the one dated 7th Sept. I have now, I think, received all of them up to the one numbered 28. This proves the value of numbering.

The letters have come but with large patches blacked out. Evidently these deal with Bengal and Bengal is a sore point, little wonder. You will have to guess what has been deleted and hence has not reached me. Another reason for delay has been the inclusion by you in one of your letters of *Nani's* note in Hindi. Hindi takes much longer to get through for a knowledge of Hindi does not seem to be among the accomplishments of the Bombay Secretariat.

I have received Mummy's snapshots—also Virginia Woolf's *Death of the Moth*³³⁹ and the foreign papers* * *³⁴⁰

I presume you did not go to Bombay for the show organized by Vakil's school—It is hardly worthwhile spending time and energy & money in travelling a long distance for one show—But of course sometimes this may be desirable—

In Bharati's message that you have sent me there is a reference to an article on Toller which she says she sent me with her book. Tell her I did not receive this article.

I was greatly interested and amused at the extracts from the airgraphs you have received from Agatha and Sheila. Gautam must be a comely kid! But then almost all children at that age are attractive and yet they

339. A posthumous selection of the essays, sketches and short stories of the author.

340. Six pages were blacked out by the censor.

grow up often into something very different. Kailas & Sheila are both goodlooking and Gautam therefore should take after them. I am glad Kailas is doing well—It would have been a good thing if he had taken a doctorate of London University.

I hope your sending my Times Book Club bill to Krishna does not mean an additional burden on him. I have no idea how my royalty accounts stand there. For the last two or three years I have received nothing from London. Surely there must have been some income. Once I cabled to Krishna to give Kailas any sum that he might require—also to use the rest for any other suitable purpose.

Datadin³⁴¹ is of course lazy & incompetent. You cannot rely upon him at all and the only way to make him work is to supervise him most of the time. He is too old a servant to be pushed out and so we must put up with him. But that is no reason why everything should be left to him. I am glad you have engaged another man to help. It is worthwhile & an investment to have more additional helps. It would be a good plan to put in wheat and potatoes—For wheat, get hold of a real kisan to help—someone who knows. Preferably get someone we have known from our own district of Allahabad.

I received yesterday a long joint letter from Chand & Tara from New York dated 15th July. Large chunks of it were blacked out. It was a very interesting letter. They are so obviously excited and pleased—I shall send them a reply—

Here is a couplet by Ghalib:

ففس میں سجدہ سے روداد چمن کہتے نہ ڈر حمدم
گری تھی جس پہ کل بجلی وہ میرا آشیان کیوں ہو؟ (غالب)

In Hindi:

कफस में मुझसे रूदाद-ए-चमन कहते न डर हम दम ।
गिरी थी जिस पे कल बिजली वह मेरा आशियाँ क्यों हो ?³⁴²

A bird in a cage is addressing an old companion outside. The two lines manage to compress in a few words a whole story of disaster which the bird is trying hard not to believe—

341. A gardener in Anand Bhawan.

342. Ghalib: Relate to me in the cage,
Do not fear, my friend,
In our garden what went on;
The nest the lightning struck, ay,
Why should it be mine alone?

कफस = cage; रूदाद = वाक्य = events; चमन = garden; हम दम = companion; आशियां = nest.

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 29.

Sept. 29, Wednesday

Ranjit is out, some days ago. I am glad. He has had a long illness.

A few days ago I received a joint letter from Chand & Tara from New York. Much of it blacked out by the censor (our own particular one) but what remained told me much of the people they had met—Clare Luce,³⁴³ Wendell Willkie,³⁴⁴ Louis Fischer, Lin Yutang & family, Pearl Buck, Walsh, Phillips,³⁴⁵ Col. Louis Johnson, Mrs. Robeson &c. A goodly crowd of worthwhile persons. All this within the first week of their arrival in New York. Probably the blacked-out passages contained messages from some of these persons to me or to India.

x

x

x

x

I am worried a little—for the first time in my life, more or less, I am developing headaches. Ten days ago I had a headache for a whole day, and a heaviness thereafter for some days. Three days ago again a headache. Night before last a pretty villainous attack just at bed time. Since then I have had a heavy head which just verges on a headache. Why? I really can't make out. I am put out, irritated.

343. Clare Boothe Luce, wife of Henry Luce, the editor of *Life* and *Time*; playwright, columnist and author; Member, House of Representatives, US Congress, 1943-47; Ambassador to Italy, 1953-57.

344. (1892-1944); Republican candidate for Presidential election in 1940; President Roosevelt's personal emissary to the Far East, 1941-42; author of *One World*.

345. William Phillips (1878-1968); while special representative of President Roosevelt in India in 1942-43, had urged him to mediate and resolve the Indian deadlock; author of *Ventures in Diplomacy*.

30.9.43

Darling Betty,

I received your letter of the 15th yesterday. I was amused at your wrath against the censor. It was good to read it and realize how youthful you are, in spite of ten years of marriage. A censor, my dear, is like the English King, beyond criticism, because he is beyond logic and reason. So why worry when he betrays this basic trait of his? True, it is irritating to be confronted with blank or rather blacked-out pages.

I wonder what I wrote to you, what was it that caught the eagle eye, riveted it, and brought out all the patent and latent powers of blacking and blueing which are often hidden in the mild exterior of a censor. I do not remember. I write what I feel like at the time of writing, avoiding, as far as I can, anything that is likely to be scratched out. Why should I take the trouble to write only to have it struck out? I am not sufficiently interested in the education of the censor to write only for his special benefit.

Perhaps it was about the conditions in Bengal that I wrote, some personal reactions. Those conditions and all that lies behind them and ahead of them, are obvious to everybody, and even the censor cannot make any difference to them.

I am glad you have been to see Raja. These jail interviews are strange mixtures of the bitter-sweet. Inevitably, and more so after a long interval, one is worked up and wants to put in a lot within the brief period allotted. The time passes all too quickly and the environment and conditions are wholly unsatisfactory. So when the time comes to leave, there is no sense of fulfilment or satisfaction. Still it is good to have the interview. The personal touch makes a lot of difference. I shall await your firsthand news of Raja.

I dislike asking for anything in the nature of food, especially in these days of famine and scarcity. But a number of invalids and semi-invalids (I am not of the number) here especially require good honey. I wish, therefore, you would arrange to send some honey to me.

I understand that *The Hindustan Times* has issued a collection of recent judgments by the Federal Court and various High Courts relating to Defence of India Rules.³⁴⁶ I suppose this is available in the Bombay

346. *Recent Judgements in India*; in this book certain judgments were brought together to show, how, in the name of emergency legislation for the "efficient prosecution of the war," the liberty of the people had been interfered with in ways unknown to the law.

book shops and the censor is not likely to object to it. So could you send it, or have it sent?

Love to you and the children—

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

October 2, 1943

Indu darling,

I have your letter No. 29 of the 21st September. Do not trouble yourself about the Hindi dictionary or the कविता कोमुदी. I have managed to get a copy of the latter through Narendra Deva. It is an old library copy.

Now that *Pupha* is out—I hope he is well enough now after his long illness—you have got the best of expert guidance for the garden. If he has the time and the chance he will set things going in the proper way. But in any event a competent gardener is necessary and you have done well to ask for one.

I remember Shelley Wang³⁴⁷ very well, although I met him only twice, I think, at various parties in London. He had an attractive and rather distinctive face. When I went to China I inquired after him but could not get any straight news. There seemed to be some mystery about him. Then someone told me that he had wanted to meet me but was too far away to travel to Chungking. And then came news of his death. Everything seemed to be rather vague and indeterminate and hence the pictures in my mind are all mixed up. I remember definitely, however, that he had a certain premonition of death on the eve of his departure for China from London.

For some years past it used to be my custom to give some khadi clothing to the servants about this time of the year. Usually this amounts to Rs. 100/- worth. Also I gave khadi coupons for Upadhyaya's children. If you can carry on this practice I shall be glad. Probably it is difficult to get khadi. Anyway you will do what you can. The children of the servants as also Upadhyaya's little girls should have first preference.

We have been having very heavy showers of rain—an unusual phenomenon here. Partly due to this and partly to other reasons, it has been cooler here this year than it was at this time last year—

347. A Chinese writer who died in July 1939.

I asked you about flower seeds in one of my letters—I do not suppose you require them as you are concentrating on vegetables. Still you might ask *Pupha* if he would like me to send some. We have masses of them, but inexpertly collected.

The swallows here have grown in number and have made their nests inside rooms and verandas. I like them; they are so swift and quiet, so unlike the noisy and quarrelsome sparrows. It is rather fascinating to see a swallow's nest being built up, quietly, efficiently and without fuss. It seems to stick on to the bare wall or a corner without any visible support. All feathers, soft and downy, collected probably from distant places and stuck together with some kind of cement.

Another frequent visitor is a kind of humming bird, smaller than the average sparrow, and with a long pointed beak. It flits about from flower to flower extracting the honey. The Hindustani name for it is, I am told, *shakarkhora* शकरखोरा— Then there is a great variety of butterflies.

There used to be a pair of binoculars in the house, rather ancient. I brought it in 1927 from Switzerland for *Dadu*. It may still be lying in some box or cupboard. Ask *Puphi* if she remembers it—

I have sent you back a packet of old foreign periodicals.

Here are two couplets of Ghalib:

جب میکدہ چھٹا تو پھر اب کیا جگہ کی قید ؟
مسجد ہو، مدرسہ ہو، کوئی خانقاہ ہو ! (غالب)
ہر بو الہوس نے حسن پرستی شعار کی
اب آبروے شیوہ اہل نظر مٹتی (غالب)

In Hindi:

शालिब : जब मैंकदा छुटा तो फिर अब क्या जगह की कैद ?
मसजिद हो, मदरसा हो, कोई खानकाह हो !
हर बुल हवस ने हुस्न परस्ती जेआर की ।
अब आवरू-ए-शेवा-ए अहले नज़र गई ॥³⁴⁸

The first couplet is easy— मैंकदा means the wine shop or wine-saloon. (मैं is wine)— खानकाह is the meeting place and the house

348. Ghalib : When the tavern itself we're made to leave,
Why restrain to a specific place?
A seminary, a monastery or else a mosque,
Any place it may now be!
When professions of the greed-worshippers
admiring beauty soar,
The grace of the truly discerning ones
finds respect no more!

of the Sufis (the mystics of Islam)— There used to be large खानकाहs where a well-known Sufi would live with his disciples and hold forth to the public.

The second couplet is more difficult. It is often quoted. It means, more or less: Now that every parvenu and conceited fool has constituted himself as a connoisseur and judge of the beautiful, there is no honour or place left for those who have the eyes to see and appreciate.

बुल हवस = हवस परस्त = greed-worshipper; हुस्न = beauty; शेअर करना = अपना तरीका बनाना; शेवा = तरीका; अहले नजर = Those with sight, i.e., those who have the capacity to appreciate beauty.

Mention of खानकाह reminds me of an interesting change in name of a famous *khankah* somewhere in Central Asia. This used to be a Buddhist monastery in the old days and, it is said, a thousand monks lived there. It was called नव विहार³⁴⁹— Later when Islam spread to Central Asia this monastery became a *khankah* and, with a very slight change, it was called नौ बहार³⁵⁰— Very few people connected this new name with its Buddhist-Indian original.

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 30—which means about thirty weeks since I started writing to you afresh from this place.

Later.

I have just received a letter from *Puphi* (Nan) dated 16th Sept. enclosing two press cuttings from New York about Chand & Tara. I have not so far received the copy of Tara's letter which she says she has sent separately. I shall return the press cuttings to her.

I have also received (from Betty) hand-made note paper, *supari* & *elachi* and some *murabba*.

I am informed that a book of poems I wanted to send you for your last birthday has at last been obtained and sent on to you! I hope it has not been sent to Naini!

P

349. *Nava Vihar.*

350. *Nau Bahar.*

Oct. 8. Friday

Vijaya Dashmi today. As on the *Id* day a week ago, we decorated our dining room with flowers &c. from our little garden—a brave show.

The newspapers in the afternoon brought the news of Jaya Prakash's arrest in Lahore.³⁵¹ This was nearly eleven months after his escape from Hazaribagh. This news made us sad for the Govt. will take their revenge on him—the full pound of flesh. What a tragedy it is that a man like Jaya Prakash should waste his ability, courage and fine enthusiasms in negative work, in hiding, in prison—Or is it going to be death for him?

October 9, 1943

Darling Indu,

I have your letter No. 30 of the 30th Sept. As you will notice, I am writing on Travancore paper which Betty has sent me. I think I have already written to you that I have received *supari* & *elachi* and some पेड़े का मुरब्बा³⁵²—I suppose Nani sent these for me.

Some two and a half years ago, when I was in Dehra, I received a letter from Mrs. Robeson from America. She wrote to me how their house in London had been smashed to bits during the London *blitz* and their library and records destroyed. She asked me if she could send me anything. I wrote to her and mentioned a number of books, not available here, which she might send—or rather I did not write to her myself but asked Betty to do so. Betty has now heard from her for the first time during these two or three years and it appears that not only did she write to her but sent her books and newspaper clippings (repeatedly). Neither the letters nor the books ever reached Betty. I am not sure about the newspaper cuttings as I remember getting a packet or two but was not sure who sent them. Betty will of course write to her and tell her so. But it would be a good thing if you kept in touch with Mrs. Robeson also. Her address two years ago used to be: Mrs. Paul R. Robeson, 555 Edgecombe Avenue, New York City.

351. Jayaprakash Narayan, detained in Hazaribagh Jail since March 1940, escaped on 9 November 1942, and from his hideout directed the Congress underground. He was captured in Nepal, escaped again, and was finally arrested in Punjab in September 1943.

352. A sweet made out of pumpkin.

Of course you can store up your furniture somewhere in Anand Bhawan. What a question to ask! I shall write to *Puphi* but my next letter to her is not due for another ten days or more. I wrote to her only three or four days ago. But surely it is not necessary for me to write to her. Nor is it necessary for you to ask my or anyone else's permission. Naturally, when one lives together a certain co-operation is necessary and references have to be made. Mention the matter to *Puphi* and fix it up with her. Hari can then take charge of the job. There are at least three, and possibly four, godowns or places where old furniture, rugs, carpets, vessels and odds and ends are kept. Repeatedly they have been weeded out and numerous cartloads of useless stuff sold off or given away. Still a great deal of junk remains which can be disposed of with advantage—not monetary advantage but from other points of view. I dislike collecting old lumber. It is not used and simply decays.

There is much of course in these godowns which can be of use on special occasions, and some things have a sentimental value. Still I think a cleaning up and weeding out are desirable, especially after the rains. I imagine the room at the back of Swaraj Bhawan, near the well, would be suitable for your extra belongings. It is a good clean room. There used to be some bookshelves in it. If these are properly arranged along the walls, the centre space can be cleared up.

I do not remember any old files of newspapers which I had asked Hari to preserve for me. I do not keep such files as they take up too much room, and anyway all manner of insects eat them up. I tried to keep some bound files of the old *Independent* of 1920 and later. But the insects made a meal of them. So you might glance through these files and unless there is some obvious and compelling reason to keep them, dispose of them. Certainly I do not want to keep the *Leader* files. It is bad enough to have to read it for news on the day of issue. A duller newspaper I have not seen.

I hope Hari is airing from time to time my clothes, as well as the other things stored up in boxes and trunks. Also the books in the library & my room should be cleaned and aired.

I do not know what the condition of our servants' quarters is and whether they are all occupied or not. They should be looked after and kept in good condition for use should any emergencies arise, especially those near the old garage. This is a matter for Ladli Bhai to look into.

I have suggested to *Puphi* that the time has come when an ambulatory service might be undertaken by the hospital, tapping the nearby villages to begin with. That is an essential development in India and we should begin to think on these lines. I am afraid my suggestion was sent too late for the Trustees' meeting. But it can be discussed,

planned out and circulated. I hope Vatsala likes the idea. I do not like static conditions. That the hospital is doing good work and is crowded is not quite enough. It should be dynamic, progressive, experimental and model. Widespread medical service in India must have an ambulatory side.

Here are some verses by Ghalib of a different type from the ones I have been sending you. They deal with *bahar*, spring, but in India *bahar* in this sense is represented more by the rainy season.

پھر اس انداز سے بہار آئی کہ ہوئے مہر وہ تماشا
دیکھو اے ساکنانِ خطہٴ خاک اس کو کہتے ہیں عالمِ آرائی
سبزے کو جب کہیں جگہ نہ ملی بن گیا روے آب پر کائی
ہے ہوا میں شراب کی تاثیر بادہ نوشی ہے بادِ پیمائی
(غالب)

In Hindi :

गालिब : फिर इस अनंदाज से बहार आई — के हुए मेहर ओ मह तमाशाई ।
देखो ऐ साकिनाने-खित्त-ए-खाक — इसको कहते हैं आलम आराई ।
सब्जः को जब कहीं जगह न मिली — बन गया रूए आब पर काई ।
है हवा में शराब की तासीर — बाद नोशी है बाद पैमाई ।³⁵³

मेहर or मेह = sun; मह = moon; sakinan = inhabitants; खित्तः = a place, मुकाम; खित्त-ए-खाक = place of dust, i.e., this world; आलम = world; आराई = आरास्ता करना, सजाना; सब्जः = grass; रू-ए-आब = the surface of the water; तासीर = असर; बाद or बादः = शराब; बाद पैमाई = हवा का इस्तेमाल करना, हवा खाना (बाद = हवा).

This is my letter No. 31.

Love

Your loving
Papu

353. Ghalib : With what a flourish
The Spring has come again!
Even the sun and the moon are lookers-on!
Look, ye dwellers of lowly dust,
This is how to deck and adorn the world;
Green, green, all is green,
Even the scum on water has turned green;
Wine's effect has the air,
Breathing it in is drinking wine!

12.10.43

Darling Betty,

I am glad you found Raja well and cheerful. I have often wondered in the past how worthwhile were these jail interviews, for invariably they leave one dissatisfied. Yet in the balance, they are worthwhile, more probably for the person in jail than for the outside interviewer.

November seems to have been a favourite month for the Nehrus to be born in. This month of birthdays is approaching and among these birthdays are yours and Indu's. So you will have to take some trouble on my behalf and manage to find suitable gifts. This should be easy as you are going down South and all manner of lovely things and delightful gifts are to be had there. Or possibly we northerners appreciate them more because they are uncommon in our parts. Please therefore function impersonally and choose, on my behalf, a gift for yourself and one for Indu. Indu's birthday is on the 19th Nov. and I should like this present to reach her by then.

Mrs. Robeson's letter to you explains something that had been bothering me for some time. Why had she not replied or sent the books I had asked for more than two years ago? The explanation now given is an obvious one—she had written and sent the books, only they did not reach us. There was no particular reason why those books should have been stopped by the censor, especially in those pre-Pearl Harbour days. Possibly they went down to the deep blue sea. But that explanation is not good enough for her letters. I have a faint recollection that a bundle or two of press cuttings came to me long ago but I was not sure who sent it. This was nearly two years ago.

You will tell her of the non-receipt of the books and letters. She must have wondered at your silence. Also tell her not to trouble to send any books, as they are not likely to reach me anyway.

Yes, Mrs. Robeson is a practical woman, very much so. She is one of the most vital and energetic women I have ever met. She is overflowing with an exuberant vitality. I can hardly imagine her sitting down quietly for any length of time. She looks after her husband Paul's business affairs. She tends him with every care lest his artistic sensibility and sensitiveness suffer a shock. She invariably drives him herself and does not trust him to the rough driving ways of the usual chauffeur. She herself is an excellent chauffeur and drove an ambulance in North France in 1917-18. All the work that is heavy enough, did not satisfy her and so, in order to occupy her leisure moments she took the doctorate of London University in anthropology.

Paul R. and she had been living in London for some time when I was there last in 1938. I met them on many occasions, usually in my flat or theirs. Once I invited them to lunch at Hachett's in Piccadilly. I chose the place particularly as one never knows what treatment might be accorded to a full-blooded Negro in London. Even so I was a little anxious. During the lunch and after I sensed something unusual but I could not make out what it was. At last the *maitre d'hotel* came to me and told me that all the waiters wanted Paul Robeson's autograph. Would he or I have any objection to it? Rather sweet. They hovered around this enormous 6 ft. 2 in. Negro and wanted to serve him in some way. Strange contrasts he used to experience in London. Racial feeling and a patronizing attitude chiefly from the middle class people, and admiration and fellow feeling from the workers. The taxi drivers often would not accept anything from him for a drive. It was considered honour enough to take him. It was this racial antagonism in the U.S. and elsewhere that had driven him to Russia, the only country, he said, where there was no such thing. He spent some years there and his little boy Paulie went to school in Moscow. Later he shifted to London.

Robeson had a wonderful collection of records in almost all languages, especially of folk songs. He used to play them frequently and try to find the common link between them. It was his opinion that folk songs everywhere were fundamentally similar as they arose from the unsophisticated minds of the masses. He took a house in London and this was reduced to rubble during the *blitz* of 1940. He lost his library and records.

At that time in 1938, he was thinking of visiting India. He had fixed up a tour programme in Australia and wanted to break journey both ways in India. He set about immediately to learn Hindustani! Various developments and the war upset his programme.

So now I have told you a great deal about the Robeson family. Essie Robeson would dash in occasionally into my flat and announce, in the American way, that she was feeling like a million dollars. I am sure she has the capacity of feeling that way whatever happens.

I am glad you are taking the children for a holiday. In your itinerary you do not mention Malabar or the West Coast, north of Travancore. The backwaters there are very lovely.

Love,

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

October 16, 1943

Darling Indu,

Since I wrote to you last week I have had two letters from you, your numbers 31 and 32. I have also received a packet of miscellaneous foreign periodicals and two books: *Life and Letters Today* (Brazil) and *Recent Judgments*.

I am returning to you a number of old periodicals and three books: Han Suyin's *Destination Chungking*, Goethe's *Faust*, & Hogben's *Mathematics for the Million*. Some foreign magazines I have sent to *chhoti Puphi* as they might interest Raja.

I am intrigued by the *Prescriber*. Who has started sending this technical medical journal to me?

I think you might as well continue the subscription to *The Indian Journal of Social Work*. It was at the editor's special request that I started getting it and I should like to encourage the venture.

I am glad you are giving khadi to the servants. I did not mention Rs. 100/- as a limit. That was merely what I used to set aside for this in previous years. Now prices are much higher and consequently more will have to be spent.

I suppose Psyche and Pan have been to Allahabad for the hospital Trustees' meeting. Pan, being a captain of industry, will have just come for a day and returned; but I hope Psyche stayed on.

So one of my letters, No. 29 dated Sept. 25th, had nearly six full pages blacked out! That certainly seems to be a record. I am afraid I cannot remember what I wrote, or rather I cannot specify what one particular letter three weeks ago contained. I do not write business letters to you which can be easily indexed and tabulated in the mind. I write as I feel at the moment. In a general way, of course, I remember what I have been writing about. But six pages surely could not have dealt with one subject. I try to avoid an invitation to the brush or blue pencil of the censor, for there is no point at all in my taking the trouble to write when the written word is going to be converted into a black smudge or a criss-cross pattern. But how to avoid this kind of thing I do not know.

Your last letter, which came yesterday, has certainly upset my composure and led me furiously to think, or perhaps it is more correct to say that my mind has been wandering like a vagabond into all manner of dark lanes and passages. You were right in feeling that I would be hurt when I learnt of *Puphi's* intention of shifting to a new house. I had not heard of this before; no one had mentioned it previously. So

when I read of it for the first time in your letter I was taken aback, amazed, and felt very tired, a feeling I do not usually experience. It is a small matter in our domestic sphere and in this world of big happenings we cannot afford to lose our perspective. And yet even such relatively small matters have a way of disturbing the mind. For many years past I have tried not to be influenced too much by personal factors for they often come in the way of larger undertakings. I had thought that I had achieved a measure of success, but repeatedly I have found how mistaken I was. Personal factors do count and make a difference; and without them life is apt to become dry and hard and somewhat dehumanised. I know a large number of people of all sorts and I manage to get on with them tolerably well. And yet really intimate personal bonds are of necessity few, very few. When these are strained, it hurts. Sometimes this becomes inevitable and circumstances beyond one's control drive one to it. But that, I think, is very rare and usually there is some defect in us, something lacking, that leads to such consequences. And the main defect is probably a want of perfect frankness. We nurse thoughts and misapprehensions when perhaps a frank approach would resolve them or, at any rate, lead us to an understanding of the other's viewpoint.

What do we aim at in life? Many things, personal and impersonal. In a sense every problem can be reduced, in the final analysis, to the problem of human relationships, the relation of one individual to another and to the group, and that of groups *inter se*. The group may be the family, a circle of friends, neighbours, city folk, nation and ultimately it becomes the international group, the world. Harmonious living in its smallest as well as its largest aspects is the ideal. In order to achieve it we evolve our political, economic, social formulae and isms, and even struggle with each other. But no formula or ism can take the place of the essence of harmonious living, which is a matter of judgment and balance, of tact and sensitiveness, of continuous adjustment and a consideration of others. If we succeed in this to some extent we gain poise and equilibrium even in a mad world.

Another way of putting the essential problem is how to strike a balance between the claims of the individual and of the larger social group—between individualism and some kind of communism. (I am not using the word in its usual and technical sense). To suppress the individual is bad and stops growth, to allow individualism full play is to have anarchy.

Society in ancient China and ancient India tended to concentrate on a small group—the family. It did not encourage, at either end, the individual or the national group. It evolved, as nowhere else, the family

system in a wide sense. It lost much thereby, but it managed to develop certain very desirable virtues also. There were far fewer self-centred individuals; there was a capacity for cooperation within the group, for adjustment, judgment, tact, poise, balance. One sees that still in China in spite of all that has happened. There is a real aristocracy and well-bredness about the Chinese which is impressive. I am afraid we in India do not show this for we have undergone a long process of breaking up. Yet somewhere, I suppose, beneath the surface, that training of thousands of years must subsist.

In the West individualism was emphasized much more with certain remarkable results in the shape of progress. It went too far and is now leading more and more to an inevitable socialism and communism. With all their manifest virtues, it is surprising how westerners (individuals apart) lack poise and balance.

I suppose the East & the West, having explored life in different directions, are unconsciously or consciously going to pool their resources some time or other, and find a common path of harmonious living.

Meanwhile, I am naturally concerned with the sphere of work in which my lot is cast. It hurts me to see how in our individual conduct we falsify the larger ideal we claim to hold. How lacking in poise and balance we are; how self-centred and incapable of adjustment. For the narrow sphere of our lives has a large bearing on the wider plane of action.

I fear I can do nothing in family affairs or other matters while I am here, cut off from contact and activity. Each one of you will have to shift for yourself as best you can. For my part, where family affairs are concerned, my mind inevitably goes back to my father—*Dadu*—and I try to think what he would have preferred. Apart from my affection for him and my regard for his memory, I owe too much to him ever to forget his wishes.

I do not know if all this rigmarole will interest you. My mind is full of what I read in your letter yesterday and I wanted to share a part of it with you. I shall write to *Puphi* in the course of the next few days.

You say that you keep my room closed. Shall I tell you how I reacted to a somewhat similar situation when you were in Switzerland and England? Often I was quite alone in the house, for *Puphi* in those days was in Lucknow. I kept the door between your room and mine wide open. Every morning I visited your room and every night I went there to bid it good night. I wanted the room to look bright and airy and cheerful, almost as if you were living there and had just gone out and might come back at any moment. Sometimes I had flowers placed there.

I give below two verses by Hali:

سرو و قمری میں یہ جھگڑا ہے وطن کس کا ہے
 کل خزاں آئے بتادے گی چمن کس کا ہے
 فیصلہ گردشِ دوراں نے یہ سو بار کیا
 (حالی) سرو کس کا ہے بدخشاں و ختن کس کا ہے

In Hindi:

सर्व व कुमरी में यह झगड़ा है वतन किसका है ।
 कल ख़ज़ां आके बता देगी चमन किसका है ॥
 फ़ैमला गर्दिश-ए-दौरां ने यह सौ बार किया !
 मेर्व किसका है. बदख़्शां व ख़तन किसका है ॥³⁵⁴

सर्व is the name of a well-known tree in Persia; कुमरी is the name of a bird;
 ख़ज़ां = autumn; चमन = garden; गर्दिश-ए-दौरां = the rolling heaven = fate.

The three names in the last line are of places in Central Asia. They often occur in Urdu & Persian writing.

My love to you my dear—Keep cheerful and fit.

Your loving
 Papu

October 17, Sunday

Two days ago I had a letter from Indu in which she informed me that one of my letters to her had nearly six pages out of 8 or 9 blacked out by the censor! This must be very nearly a record. What is one to write if this kind of thing happens? I have no clear recollection of what I wrote. Part of it was probably about Bengal—various suggestions about the care of refugees!

x x x x

354. Hali: Who has the right on this garden?
 Both, the cypress tree and the ringed dove do contend:
 Whose is it?
 The Autumn will soon pronounce on them!
 Time and again
 The ceaseless round of heavens has shown
 Who is to hold Marv
 And who to hold Badakhshan and Tartary!

But this letter of Indu's contained something else which hit me hard. She wrote that Nan had decided to leave Anand Bhawan and shift to another house in Allahabad. Nan has not written anything about this to me.

At any time to think of shifting in this way would have been silly, wasteful and undesirable. Just at present it seems to me almost unthinkable. Why then has she so decided?

Obviously she and Indu do not get on together. They rub each other the wrong way. Yet . . .³⁵⁵ But why go over all these arguments which have filled my mind these two days and upset me so much?

I wrote to Indu yesterday. Today I felt a little better—more composed.

x

x

x

x

Asaf Ali has had a bad attack of stomach trouble—colic pain. Three days of it makes him look like a ghost.

October 23, 1943

Darling Indu,

Last week I gave you my reactions about the proposal that *Puphi* should move into a new house. A few days later I wrote in more or less the same vein to *Puphi*. Inevitably one cannot write about intimate personal matters in letters from prison. Yet I felt I must let you and *Puphi* have some inkling of what I thought. Having done so, my job is over and I do not worry any longer over it. Nor should you—yesterday I had a letter from *Puphi*, written a little before she went back to Bengal, and she mentioned this matter in it. And now, having disposed of this and put it by in some corner of my mind, I return, following Voltaire's advice, to my little cottage patch. But I want to know and feel that you will not burden yourself with what has happened or what I have written about it. Let us not occupy ourselves with the smaller difficulties of life when everything that is big is continually calling to us and demanding our utmost effort of mind and body.

Yesterday I also had a letter from Amma from Benares. Tell her that I received her *supari* &c. Also that she might send me a further supply—a mixture of *supari*, *elachi* and लौंग, with the *supari* slightly roasted. I have plenty left with me but by the time a second lot comes,

355. As in the source.

I shall be in need of it. Maulana is the largest consumer of this mixture.

I wonder if you could find and send me my little foot-rug which I had in Dehra Dun and used for spinning and some exercises—*asans*? I asked for it last year through Betty, when you were in Naini, but somehow it did not come. It is a product of Allahabad rural industry and was sent to me to Dehra by *Puphi*. It comes in handy, especially for the exercises. I used to have a coir-mattress in my room here but bugs—खटमल—took possession of it and multiplied exceedingly and so I discarded it. Against these bugs I wage unceasing war, with varying results. Without some kind of soft material to lie on, it is difficult to do some of the *asans*. Hence the need for the foot-rug. But if by any chance you cannot find it, do not worry. I can raise a substitute for it.

So you are spinning. It is dreary work to begin with but as soon as one gets into the swing of it, there is a fascination about it. I am spinning more or less daily for about half an hour. This is not much and hence I am not producing much yarn, though I spin fairly fast. Since I began, seven weeks ago, I have spun about 11000 yards of 25-30 count yarn. I am told that about 30000 yards are required for a sari. In another four months I might have enough for a sari for you!

What happened to the yarn I spun in Dehra? I gave it to *Psyche* and a small piece of it came for you last year at the time of your wedding. But I had given enough yarn, I think, for four saris or their equivalent. Having given it away I have of course no claim on it but I am interested to know its fate.

Some of my yarn from Dehra Dun (and subsequently) was left in the drawer of my dressing table. I remember asking once to send it on to *Psyche*. Did you do so? If not you might hold on to it and add it to what I might send later.

We had very heavy rain for several days and then one morning I noticed a pair of wagtails, the first of the season. I prophesied a change in the weather and, sure enough, there was a marked change that very night. There was a nip in the air and our mild cold weather seemed to have started. Our friends here were impressed by my prophecy and began to regard me as a minor weather prophet.

Indeed the weather has changed here and is pleasanter; the change took place much later last year. The old familiar winter sky is beginning to appear. For some reason or other, I know this sky much better than the summer one, though normally we keep out much more in the summer. Perhaps the sky is clearer during winter; but the real reason probably is that I began to take interest in the night sky one winter long ago and came to recognize many stars and constellations. And,

because I came to know them separately, a sense of friendly companionship arose and every night I greeted them and made my bow to them. It is odd how this kind of knowledge of stars, or birds, or flowers, brings them nearer to us, as if there was some secret bond, a relationship which others did not know but which we treasured. And stars, and the moon of course, have a way of looking at you, and almost one can imagine a sly wink or a friendly smile. Yet sometimes they seem so distant and cold and unconcerned, as indeed they are.

During these October mornings, the first thing that I see when I wake up (I sleep in a verandah) is Venus, the star of the morning. By its position I judge whether it is time to get up or not.

When you were at Panchgani I suggested to you to glance through Sylvain Levi's *Le Theatre Indien* which I was returning to Psyche. I do not suppose you had the time and the book went back to the library from which it came. It was a 50-year-old book and yet I found it fascinating. I have now been reading a more recent book on the subject: Keith's *The Sanskrit Drama*.³⁵⁶ It gives much more information and recent discoveries but it is minus the poetic lilt of Sylvain Levi. Why are scholars' books dull?

I am fascinated by the old theatre of Greece and India, the only two countries which had it. China had something but it was not, so far as I know, developed. The art of the theatre tells us more about a culture and civilization than most other things. It makes the past live and we can see and understand it in terms of human beings. Greece & India in this respect offer us very different pictures of the theatre. There is a majesty about the Greek drama, a power which grips. On the other hand the Indian drama is, curiously enough, a little more akin to our modern conceptions, (the analogy should not be taken far). The language is majestic enough sometimes, and frequently it has an entrancing lyrical beauty. But, above all, there is a human-ness about this Sanskrit-Prakrit drama which is pleasing.

I am sorry that I do not know Greek chiefly because I cannot read the Greek plays in the original, and I am sorry that I do not know enough Sanskrit to be able to read Ashvaghosa and Bhasa, and Kalidasa and Bhavabhuti.³⁵⁷

Do you know an interesting fact? The earliest known Sanskrit play (by Ashvaghosa) was discovered at Turfan on the edge of the Gobi

356. Published in 1924, it deals with the origin, development, theory and practice of Indian drama.

357. Ashvaghosa was a poet and philosopher at the court of Kanishka, Bhasa (fl.A.D. 350) wrote 13 plays and Bhavabhuti was a dramatist at the court of Yasovarman of Kanauj.

desert! Some other early plays were discovered in Tibet. Turfan has long fascinated me as a place where several great cultures intermingled, far away, right on the edge of a great desert. I wrote something about it in *Glimpses*.

Old Ashvaghosa was a Buddhist propagandist. He was a resident of Ayodhya probably (roundabout the beginning of the Christian era). His mother's name was Suvaranakshi—rather sweet. It means 'the golden-eyed'.

Soon we shall have *Diwali*, the festival of light. Who will have the heart to celebrate it when darkness and sorrow grip so many the world over? And Bengal, the heart-breaking, whose long shadow falls all over the country.

Puphi wrote to me that *Pupha* had again been ill and had a mild attack of pleurisy. After his long stay in hospital, this relapse is very distressing. I am glad he is thinking of going to Khali.

Two more Urdu couplets—but, tell me, do you want them? The first is by Akbar of Allahabad. It is a good definition, if the word may be used, of the conception of God or the supernatural.

تو دل میں تو آتا ہے سمجھ میں نہیں آتا
معلوم ہوا بس تری پہچان یہی ہے ! (اکبر الہ آبادی)

In Hindi:

अकबर इलाहाबादी :

तू दिल में तो आता है, समझ में नहीं आता
मालूम हुआ, बस, तेरी पहचान यही है !³⁵⁸
तन की उर्यानी से बेहतर नहीं दुनिया में लबास
(आتش) یہ وہ جامہ ہے کہ جس کا نہیں سیدھا الٹا

आतिश :

तन की उर्यानी से बेहतर नहीं दुनिया में लबास
यह वह जामा है के जिसका नहीं सीधा उल्टा—³⁵⁹

उर्यानी = Nakedness.

Love

Your loving
Papu

358. Akbar Allahabadi: To our hearts Thou dost come,
Beyond our reach Thou remainst;
Thus alone Thou dost manifest Thyself!

359. Atish :
No dress in the world is good
As naked beauty is;
A garment this,
No wrong side which e'er shows!

October 30, 1943

Darling Indu,

Your last letter, No. 33 of Oct. 17th, has worried me a little. I do not at all like your getting a rise in temperature. Perhaps the changing season is partly responsible, perhaps you have been tiring yourself too much. You know how to look after yourself. Do so and take no risks. It is desirable to keep in touch with your doctor. Not that much doctoring is required but a doctor is helpful in finding out any possible complications. Thus in this season malaria is often prevalent. Jairaj Behari³⁶⁰ used to visit our house. Does he still do so? He is fairly reliable though old-fashioned. You have Vatsala near you. Kak³⁶¹ is also good.

Yes, you will feel rather lonely in Anand Bhawan. We have to put up with these changes and variations in the theme of life and, if we know how to, we can even profit by them.

Now that *Puphi* has apparently shifted, you will probably have to make some alterations in the domestic arrangements, for instance, the servants. Some of the servants must have gone over to Mukerji Road (where is Mukerji Road?). You will require a cook and someone else to serve &c. I suppose one of the Buddhi, Tulsi³⁶² family can function as a cook. Anyway you should engage the necessary staff.

In one of your letters you referred to your doing a good deal of typing. Why not engage a typist?—a part-time one if you prefer.

About servants, I suppose Khaliq has gone over to Mukerji Road. That is as it should be for we possess no car and there is not much chance of our doing so. But if by any chance Khaliq is at a loose end and not employed, I should like you to keep him on, even though he may be totally unnecessary. He is one of our oldest and most faithful servants and I do not want him to join the unemployed. A house like Anand Bhawan requires a number of persons to look after it, otherwise it deteriorates. They are house servants rather than personal servants.

Yesterday I received a bundle of slivers (पूती) which I suppose Psyche sent. They are enough to last me six months or more. I am told that some honey is also somewhere on the way.

I am sending you two books—4 fat volumes. They are Webbs: *Soviet Communism*, 2 volumes, and Sri Aurobindo's *Collected Poems*

360. President of Allahabad Medical Association for some years; died in 1969.

361. Jainath Kak (1901-1979); an E.N.T. surgeon of Allahabad.

362. Buddhilal and Tulsi Ram were cooks in Anand Bhawan.

and Plays, 2 vols. Also a number of the *Reader's Digest*. The Webbs' book belongs to Puphi; so please return it to her.

A few days ago I received the typescript of Pupha's translation of Kalidasa's *Ritusamhara*. I like it. Somehow this put me in mind of my own MSS³⁶³ which I wrote in Dehra and left unfinished. This was, in a way, a continuation of my *Autobiography*. It is completely out of date now and of little use. I have no desire to continue it and I grow less and less interested in my own life during that period. There are some chapters in it, however, which interest me from a different point of view. They form a group containing a rapid review of Indian culture &c. One of them is called "The Discovery of India". Because of these chapters I should like to have this MSS or rather typescript, if that is possible. I suggest that you might send it through the usual channel (the Bombay Govt.) and write a letter also to the person concerned (the Secretary to the Home Department—Political). You might say that in case this typescript is not to be sent on to me, it should be returned to you. I do not want to lose it.

You will find this in the steel cupboard in my dressing room—the one nearer the bath room. Probably the MSS is there as well as a typed copy. Send the typed copy, not the MSS.

More trouble for you. Could you find out in the Library a copy of the *All Parties Committee's Report* (commonly known as the Nehru Report) which was issued in 1928. There are several copies about but it may not be easy to spot them. Also I should like to have the four *Red Books*³⁶⁴ (pamphlets) issued by the National Planning Committee in 1939-40. They have red covers, unbound and are numbered 1 to 4 (the first one is not numbered). These should be in my room or possibly in my dressing room. If you can discover all these books please send them. I had them in Dehra with me.

I have noticed references in the newspapers to some new books published in India. These are probably easily available. I am in no hurry for them but some time or other I should like to have them. You might just note them down. They are:

1. *Modern Indian Culture—A Sociological Study* by D.P. Mukerji—(India Publishers, Allahabad) Rs. 4/12—2. *Us: A People's Symposium*—Edited by Hiren Mukerji (Anti-Fascist Writers and Artists Association, Calcutta) 4/- 3. *Modern Islam in India—A Social Analysis* by Wilfrid Cantwell Smith (Minerva Book Shop—Lahore).

What a lot of trouble I am giving you!

363. Extracts from it have been printed in *Selected Works*, Volume 11 pp. 753-802.

364. They contained the resolutions of the National Planning Committee.

Allahabad must now be pleasant, on the verge of its delightful winter climate. But for this fact I might have suggested to you to go elsewhere for a change. Besides travelling & setting up a new house elsewhere is too much of a nuisance.

More Urdu verses:

مت رنجہ کر کسی کو کہ اپنے تو اعتقاد
(میر) دل ڈھائے کر جو کعبہ بنایا تو کیا ہوا

In Hindi:

मीर: मत रंज कर किसी को के अपने तो एतकाद ।
दिल ढाए कर जो काबः बनाया तो क्या हुआ ॥³⁶⁵

اے برق تو ذرا تڑپی، ٹھہر گئی
(امیر) یاں عمر کٹ گئی ہے اسی اضطراب میں

अमीर: ऐ बर्क, तू ज़रा तड़पी ठहर गई ।
यां उम्र कट गई है इसी इज्तेराब में ॥³⁶⁶

The first couplet has a slightly archaic construction but is easy enough. काबः (or क़ाबः *Kaaba*) is of course the place in Mecca where a great black stone (a meteorite) is the object of pilgrimage & worship. It is towards the *Kaaba* that Muslims look when praying. The verse means—do not cause pain to another—at this cost it is not worthwhile even to make your *Kaaba* (or approach God).

बर्क lightning, इज्तेराब ~ बेचैनी

The idea being that the lightning flashes (possibly in pain) and then rests for a while; but for me there is no rest from this malaise.

I have just received your letter 34, undated—You do not mention your health, so I hope all's well. A big chunk in the letter is blacked out.

Love to you and Feroze—

Your loving
Papu

365. Mir : Distress no one;
This is my faith;
To what avail
If a heart you break
And a *Ka'ba* you raise!
366. Amir : O lightning, for a moment you flutter
And find your peace;
But me, restless ever,
Peace I am ne'er to know!

3.11.43

Betty darling,

I have your letter of the 25th. I am sorry to learn that you and the boys have been unwell with the 'flu and in consequence the trip to the South has had to be postponed. What worries me even more is your report of Raja's condition. I did not know he had regular asthma, though of course I knew that he was asthmatic in a sense. Asthma is most distressing and painful during attacks. It is small consolation that it does not affect the organism in the way some other diseases do. From my childhood upwards I had experience of father's asthma. Later quite a number of my friends suffered from it. Here I have frequent experience of it, not myself, but in Narendra Deva, who has had a very bad time because of it. Asthma is a vague generic term and each person seems to have his own particular brand of it. It is seldom that the same remedy fits different cases. Apart from any basic treatment, it is important to find something that gives immediate relief. Father discovered this, after many experiments in Tucker's asthma cure, which became his constant companion, night and day. But I know cases where this has not functioned or given relief. This allergic business is extraordinarily difficult to counter. Is Raja given any injections when he has an asthmatic attack? Having a light and very early evening meal helps.

I have received the bundle of *punis* and 6 bottles of honey which Psyche sent. Will you please thank her on my behalf and give her my love?

I am looking forward greatly to your book. You have whetted my appetite for it—I hope it will be out soon.

I like Buchi³⁶⁷—she is a dear girl.

Indu writes to me that there is a chance of your going to Allahabad. You do not mention it. November is a good month there for a visit—
Love,

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

367. Swarupa Dás, a grand-daughter of C.R. Das.

Nov. 6, 1943

Indu darling,

This letter will reach you probably a little before your birthday; my next will be too late for it. So this must carry an extra load of love and good wishes for you. You have turned the quarter of a century—how imposing it sounds! I remember when I was this age I used to announce, when asked, that I was a quarter of a century old! That sounded impressive. Now, that the half century for me has long passed, I am no longer eager to remember it. Unable to send you anything from here, I asked Betty (who was then thinking of going to South India) to get something for you from those lands of artistry and good craftsmanship, something that you would like, and to send it to you on my behalf. I hope she has done so, although her southern trip has fallen through. So, my love to you, *cara mia*, and may the difficulties and the distresses that surround us strengthen you in mind and body, and not abate the capacity to live wholesomely and beautifully and to take joy from the beauty and goodness of life, in spite of the ugliness and ills that lie around us.

I have had two letters from *Puphi*—one was written before she had got my letter, the other was an answer and was fuller and more detailed. I can understand a little better now how her mind has worked, though I could guess at it even previously. Nothing more need be said about this matter for the present. It is always distressing to have to consider domestic complications and yet it is far better to face them squarely and frankly, as we should face everything else, rather than to ignore them or seek to cover them up. They grow in the shadows and, ghost-like, haunt us. And we must always see them in proper perspective, and then, often enough, they appear small and ridiculous. It is terribly difficult to control external events; all we can do is so to behave ourselves in thought and action as to prevent complications in our own lives as well as in the larger world, and to help, in so far as we can, in clearing up the messes which meet us at every turn.

I am very glad you have taken Anand Bhawan in hand and are rejuvenating it. It is young enough in years, but somehow it has carried with it the age and tradition of the older house. Like me, it developed a faded and *passe* look, and it was entirely beyond my capacity to change this. It was time it changed, and so I rejoice that you are putting into its thought-laden atmosphere some of your own brightness and vitality. Shake it up and make it sit up and look round. It has become too introspective and stuck in the ruts. It should represent

the life and activity of the younger generation, and not just the worn-out grooves of aging people. Do not hesitate to spend some money over this transformation.

As for books, they go on accumulating and it is always a problem where to put them. The library is full, my room is full, so is my dressing room. Some other rooms, like yours, have a good supply of them. From time to time I used to discard a number, or send them across to Swaraj Bhawan. The only thing that I can think of is to have bookshelves fixed in other rooms. For instance, in the big guest room on the first floor, low ones, like the kind I have in my room. Old books, which are not usually wanted, can be transferred to these new shelves. I want to keep a fairly select lot in my own room—old favourites and new books.

The shelves in my room were originally made by the Christian Workshop. Later I had them made by Lohia Pande of Muthiganj, who did the work rapidly and more cheaply. You can get into touch with him and ask him to send one of his men for measurements &c.

Puphi writes to me that already you have made a great difference to Anand Bhawan. "I wish you could see what Indu has done to the house. It has become alive and beautiful." Well, I shall certainly see it one day—so go ahead.

What about fixing up one room as a kind of 'China room'? We have plenty of odds and ends from China lying about unused or wrongly used. Probably the big guest room upstairs would be suited for this. But these shelves full of books may not perhaps fit in.

It would be a good thing if you consulted Ladli Bhai occasionally about Anand Bhawan. He likes to be consulted. Not that he is at all uptodate in the matters of house furnishing or arrangement.

Your last letter had over half a page blacked out—in the third page. What this was about I do not know.

Do not trouble to send me the *Prescriber* or anything so obviously uninteresting for me. But I like a variety of reading matter.

You mention that *Psyche* was accompanied by someone when she came to Allahabad. I cannot make out the name as you have written it. It begins with an 'N'.

I have sent you another small parcel of flower seeds, nearly all grown by us. There is nothing special about them. We have such a lot that I do not know what to do with them. Send some to *Pupha* and to others who might need them. One particular one I should like to recommend. This is *ipomoea*—heavenly blue (a morning glory creeper variety). This is much better than the ordinary morning glory. It has lovely large blue flowers, masses of them, and it grows rapidly. Perhaps

you know it. Try it in some place where it can spread out laterally. The only care it requires is to train its shoots to follow particular directions along a trellis-work or strings. You can make any patterns out of these strings. I do not know how successful our seeds will be.

Coleus is a good ornamental plant. It takes some time to germinate—better have the seeds put in a pot as a nursery. Once out it is hardy and you can cut off any branch, stick it into a pot and it grows.

At present one of our chief troubles is an animal who is bent on ruining our garden. It comes at night and pulls out our seedlings. It has taken a special fancy to the peas (vegetable) and the sweet peas (flowers). Evidently it likes the pea seed and eats it up. I am greatly annoyed and exercised about it. I used to call it, from memories of childhood, ऊद बिलाव,³⁶⁸ but apparently that is not right. It is more frequently referred to as the घूस or the bandicoot.

There are two books which you might send me whenever you are sending a parcel. One is a history of Russia which Svetoslav or George Roerich gave me. I forget the name of the author—It is a substantial volume and there is an inscription in it by Roerich—I think it should be in my dressing room—The other book I should like to have is Milton's poems, especially his *Paradise Lost*. (A strange and unexpected desire to read Milton!) Probably there are two or three copies of this. One I remember, in leather binding, presented to me at Harrow for good work!

Do you know the girl Ballo is engaged to? When is the wedding coming off?

Here is something from Ghalib—

دل نادان تجھے عوا کیا ہے ؟ آخر اس درد کی دوا کیا ہے ؟
 ہم ہیں مشتاق اور وہ بیزار یا الہی یہ ماجرا کیا ہے ؟
 جب کہ تجھ بن کوئی نہیں موجود پھر یہ ہنگامہ اے خدا کیا ہے ؟

गालिब: दिन-ए-नादां तुझे हुम्रा क्या है?—आखिर इस दर्द की दवा क्या है ?
 हम हैं मुशताक और वह बेज़ार—या इलाही यह माजरा क्या है ?
 जब के तुझ विन कोई नहीं मौजूद—फिर ये हंगामा ऐ खुदा क्या है ?³⁶⁹

368. *Ud Bilao* — Otter.

369. Ghalib : O poor heart of mine,
 What ails thee?
 What pain is this?
 Is there, is there any remedy?
 So full of longing for her am I
 But she is ever so displeased;
 Pray, why is it so, O my Lord?
 When nothing exists but Thee
 What then is this commotion, O Lord!

नादां=unwise; मुशताक = eager and expectant to see the loved one; माजरा = state of affairs; हंगामा = rumpus.

Your last letter which reached me was number 34. This letter of mine is No. 35.

Love

Your loving
Papu

Nov. 8. Monday

It is three weeks since I have written here. And yet there was much to write—some facts and many changes of mood.

Nan has shifted from Anand Bhawan to a house in Mukerji Road (wherever that might be) in Allahabad. After writing to Indu on the subject I wrote to her—at some length and with feeling. Soon afterwards I heard from her and she mentioned that for various reasons which she could not enumerate she had decided to leave Anand Bhawan. She said that this had nothing to do with Indu or Feroze; that she had discussed this matter with Ladli Bhai who had agreed; also that she had spoken on this subject to Psyche who had gone on a brief visit to Allahabad for a hospital meeting.

I was not at all satisfied with her letter. What distressed me most was this last-minute reference to me after the decision had been taken and, in fact, partly given effect to. I did not write to her again and waited for her reply to my previous letter.

That came a few days ago. It has made a difference. Even without it I had toned down and the first flush of excitement & the disturbance caused thereby had passed. Analysing my reaction to her letter, I found that what had comforted me most was the fact, which appears to be clear enough now, that there was no additional friction between her and Indu. Certainly this had nothing to do with the decision to leave Anand Bhawan. Friction there was but between Betty and Nan.

This is an old affair but it is odd that it should have cropped up now and led to these results. I do not know all the facts, but I know enough and can guess at much else. Ultimately it is due I suppose to temperamental differences, to changes in our domestic economy during Betty's early girlhood, to family jealousies &c.

I grew up in a family circle which was more or less an organic whole with stability and security. There were of course many minor points

of conflict but they did not shake the essential equilibrium of the organism. Nan had much the same background in her teens. At a critical moment in her life this stability and security seem to fade away and she was shaken up. Betty grew up during the period of change and upsets, and Indu has never known any other period. So each one of us has been moulded differently by differing circumstances.

The great change that father underwent in 1919-20 affected the family in many ways. Probably it affected Betty more than others. She grew up in those formative years with a sense of being ignored, of not being cared for as much as her brother and sister had been. And this was partly true, though the responsibility lay with circumstances. She must have felt at a loose end somewhat. Temperamentally she required more looking after and affection, for she is far softer and more sentimental than any of us. Compared to her Nan is hard.

And so a sense of grievance grew, of being deprived of something which others had. Nan & Ranjit living in Anand Bhawan shared with me not only the family house but the family tradition from which she was more and more cut off, so she felt. Consequently they grew nearer to me and we shared many activities together. Her interests diverged—So many other happenings created friction—Ranjit's odd behaviour towards Raja and sometimes Betty.

I remember the curious and excited letter Betty wrote to me when the question of Chand's & Tara's going to America was being discussed. She was violently against it; the mere thought of it made her angry. When I expressed an opinion in favour of their going, she was irritated and obviously did not like it.

She wrote more strongly then to Nan. According to Nan, rather hysterical letters—Poor girl, how much she has suffered from the complex of being ignored or being given second place. I do not think I have consciously done or said anything to encourage this notion. Indeed I do not feel that way. I have always felt a kind of semi-parental responsibility for her, which Nan did not stand in need of. It is true that political and other activities have brought Nan nearer to me simply because we functioned together more. Betty is even less politically minded than Nan—

Neither Nan nor Betty is really inclined towards political activity, or rather the type of political activity that Congress has brought in its train in India. In normal political activity, Nan would do well; Betty would not — Anyway circumstances and the family tradition have forced a measure of politics on both of them. Neither, I think, has taken very willingly to the compulsion (as Kamala did). But Nan has adapted herself to it and functioned with some success and effectiveness.

She has that ability. The emotional drive which Kamala had is lacking. Betty has resisted the compulsion more and being away in Bombay had less of it to deal with.

I am curiously blind to many things that happen right in front of my nose. Bebee told me so once, so also Indu—both very pointedly and bluntly. Several others have hinted at it. I think they are all right and there is that blind spot. Partly perhaps because I wrap myself up with my work, and deliberately avoid interference with other people's lives. May be I am self-centred.

However that may be, it had never struck me that Betty would dislike the idea of Nan & Ranjit living in Anand Bhawan, that this would become a symbol to her of her own estrangement from family tradition. So Nan says in her letter to me and possibly there is a good deal of truth in it.

But for Nan to shift to a new house in Allahabad is not to solve the problem. Some family problems are apt to be almost insoluble.

x x x x

I have been cheered up by the fact that Indu has suddenly woken up and taken the house in hand. She writes to me that she is putting it in a spick & span condition, so that it may always be ready to receive me and a dozen guests if necessary—Nan gives independent testimony to the effect of the changes that Indu has brought about. "I wish you could see what Indu has done to the house. It has become alive and beautiful for the first time in its existence the house is what a house is meant to be."

x x x x

Nan's & Betty's books will be published some time or other—both autobiographical. How utterly different they are likely to be, although they should have the same background and partly the same content. The style will differ, the mode of approach, almost everything—I fear there will be an element of competition between the two sisters. Betty will feel terribly hurt if her book is not at least as successful as Nan's. I am glad Betty's book is coming out before Nan's.

x x x x

Ranjit has sent me his translation of the *Ritusamhara*. It is good. His long introduction is also good and rather self-revealing.

He continues to be ill—Had a mild attack of pleurisy in Bombay and is now in Khali. I have written to him, after ascertaining from Chetta Khan whether I could write to a brother-in-law. His answer

was not wholly definite but he encouraged me to write.

Ranjit has now been out for five weeks or more. But he and Nan have not met yet! She was in Bengal when he was discharged. He went to Bombay. By the time he returned to Allahabad, she had again gone to Bengal. And then he went to Khali.

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Chand and Tara appear to be flourishing at Wellesley. Two bright young girls like them are better ambassadors for India abroad than most of our clever and learned politicians.

Chand wrote to me, soon after arrival, that their saris were rather a nuisance and they attracted attention &c. They were going to change over to American clothes soon. Evidently they have changed their opinion about the effectiveness of the sari — Now they want more saris to be sent to them and declare they will wear them most of the time, except for college work!

Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt³⁷⁰ invited them to tea in New York and asked them to spend a day with her when they go to Washington. What a mighty difference there is between Republican and Kingly environments and habits! In England such an informal meeting of two college girls with the Queen is inconceivable. And what of the pomp and circumstance of the Viceroy's House in New Delhi, or even of the Governor's palaces?

The girls have been visiting Clare Luce and the Robesons — Duly admired Clare's beauty, the Luce home and the English butler there. Frances wants to know from Nan why on earth she has sent such clever girls to the U.S. Whatever can they learn there.

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Some days ago I asked Maulana (during my daily visit to the room after 4 o'clock tea) what advice he would give to Gandhiji about the present situation on the supposition that he met him and could talk to him frankly. I added that, so far as I was concerned, it was a very difficult question and I was by no means sure of the answer myself. Normally I do not trouble myself about hypothetical questions. If I am clear that I am acting (or not acting) correctly in the present, and that there is nothing more that I could do unless circumstances changed, I do not worry overmuch about possible contingencies.

³⁷⁰. (1884-1963); wife of Franklin Roosevelt; Chairman of the U.N. Human Rights Commission, 1947-51; U.S. Representative at the U.N., 1946-52; publications include *The Lady of the White House* and *India and the Awakening East*.

Though of course the mind continues to function and probe into the future.

Maulana's answer was quick and immediate, rather too eager I thought. He said he had no doubt about it. He would advise that owing to the new situation that is developing in the N.E. of India, the appointment of Mountbatten³⁷¹ to the South East Command and the probability of an offensive against Japan, also because of the famine in Bengal and elsewhere, the time had come back to withdraw formally the A.I.C.C. resolution of August 8th about C.D. &c. and to go back to the previous resolution of the A.I.C.C. passed in Allahabad in May 1942. This meant that politically we were not cooperating with the British Government in India, until circumstances changed and made it possible for us to cooperate honourably, but we did not wish to hinder in any way any operations against Japan. Also we would help in every way to meet the famine situation. He said he was quite clear that we could not cooperate politically with the British in present circumstances. But C.D. was anyway dead and it would be right to admit this and formally end it. This would give the Congress an opportunity to function in some ways and prevent a further deterioration in the situation — political, communal & economic.

I said that I agreed that C.D., such as there had been, was dead and there was no chance of its revival in the near future — To recognize a patent fact cannot be wrong — But in effect we had not started C.D. It had come more or less spontaneously; indeed something much more than C.D. had come.

But declaring C.D. ended or advising the country not to indulge in it was one thing, and withdrawing the August 8th resolution was another and a more far-reaching thing. Apart from the C.D. clause in this resolution there was much else.³⁷² Are we to withdraw all this? Maulana agreed that the rest might stand — It was only the operative C.D. clause that should be withdrawn.

I said that I could conceive of this being done but I was doubtful of the consequences. If this was a one-sided effort on our part, it was possible that Congress would continue illegal and large numbers of our

371. Lord Louis, later Earl, Mountbatten of Burma (1900-1979); a great grandson of Queen Victoria; Supreme Allied Commander in South East Asia, 1943-46; Viceroy of India, 1947; Governor-General of independent India, 1947-48.

372. Offer of a federal constitution with residuary powers in the provinces, declaration that all power must belong to the workers and peasants and a call for the foundation of a world federation.

people remain as detenus or as convicted prisoners &c. Further that most of the restrictions on public activities would prevent us from functioning effectively. We would be in a difficult position. Also if we made a move, *suo moto*, Govt. might say that it was not enough; we must give assurances of good behaviour for the future. How could we possibly do so?

Further, I said that I had always felt it difficult to make up my mind about any course of action which affected the public, without sensing the public reaction to it. About principles one can be sure, but the application of these principles to certain contingencies demanded a knowledge of the public mind — the mass mind, the Congress mind &c. Ignorance of this may result in our action not only falling flat but actually doing harm —

To some extent we, sitting here, could form a vague opinion about the state of public mind, but we really did not have enough data from censored newspaper reports. The personal touch, which is more essential in India than in more politically advanced countries, was entirely absent. We did not even know how the Congress mind as a whole, whether in prison or outside, would react to any step. With this lack of contact and in ignorance, we might be left high and dry.

Maulana said that while he recognized difficulties and complications, he felt assured that if we took the step he suggested, the Congress would become a lawful organization and most of the people in prison would be discharged. We would have a chance of not only working for famine relief but of stopping the rot in the communal situation which was being deliberately encouraged by the British Govt.'s policy.

There our talk that day ended. I had no other purpose in mind than to find out how Maulana's mind was working, and thereby to help my own mind to function — The question I had put was based on the possibility of our meeting Bapu. There was a hint in the papers that some such meeting might take place after Wavell came — It struck me then as a definite possibility (though I am doubtful of it now). That meant that Govt. would take some initiative in the matter by allowing us to meet and we would have to respond to it in some way. That we here should do anything in the matter off our own bat did not appear to me necessary or desirable. So no question of immediate action arose in my mind. I dropped the matter.

The next day, however, Maulana sent for Vallabhbhai and me and broached the subject again in a more definite and formal way.

But I have written enough for the day in this journal. I shall continue this tomorrow or later.

November 10, Wednesday

Yesterday I wrote a long letter to Nan. I discussed family affairs &c and felt better for having done so. My mind is at peace now and I am no longer worried about Nan & Ranjit leaving Anand Bhawan —

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To go back to the subject I was writing on here day before yesterday. Maulana sent for Vallabhbhai and me and told us that he had been thinking hard as to what we should do regarding the political situation. He did not wish to say anything till his own mind was clear. So far he had not been sure, but in the course of the night and during the small hours of the morning he had come to a conclusion and he wanted to share this immediately with us. He referred also to his talk with me the day before when I had asked him a question.

What he told us was much the same — what he had said to me previously but with one vital difference — my question had involved a meeting with Bapu, a discussion with him and the advice we should give him, or the opinions we should express to him on the present situation. There was no question of our approaching Govt. or taking any other action without a previous meeting with Bapu. But now Maulana wanted us to take the initiative in informing Govt. that we had decided to, or were prepared to, withdraw the C.D. part of the August Resolution in order to help in famine relief and not to hinder in the forthcoming operations against the Japanese in Burma. He made it clear that he was not for any political cooperation with the Govt. till circumstances changed. He merely wanted to go back to the passive non-cooperative position of pre-August days. It was not clear to me whether this meant a complete withdrawal of the August Resolution and a reversion to the A.I.C.C. resolution of May 1942 (in Allahabad) or a mere modification and withdrawal of the direct action part of the August Resolution. I understood Maulana to mean the former, but, on my pursuing the subject further, he seemed to agree to the latter. Anyhow that was more a question of wording — and yet the difference was important and represented different approaches.

Maulana spoke to us at some length and argued that we must be realists — The political and communal position was progressively deteriorating, largely because of the British Govt.'s persistent attempts to encourage the communal elements. Problems that had so far been difficult enough of solution were now tending to become insoluble. Our

release, as a result of our withdrawing direct action &c. would not enable [us] to solve these problems. Indeed we should not make a direct attempt at their solution till a favourable opportunity offered itself. Still, in spite of our somewhat quiescent attitude, our presence outside would steady the position and prevent further deterioration, communal or political. This would lead to fresh openings for tackling the bigger problems. Such a course of action would be in the interests of Indian freedom, of the Congress, and would fit in with our wider world policy.

Maulana added that he was sure that Gandhiji would approve of this action on our part.

I was somewhat taken aback by his definiteness and eagerness, although our talk the day before had partly prepared me for some change in his outlook. My own reaction was instinctively against his proposal. I did not go into any lengthy arguments. I pointed out, however, that any such step seemed to me full of risks and dangers. I was chiefly concerned with the psychological aspect—the reaction on the Indian public mind—and I felt convinced that this would be bad. The Congress might well be split up or just fade away almost. Unless I saw some definite good in it, I would not advise any step which might involve the whole freedom movement in peril and danger. True our present position was unsatisfactory. But that was no reason why we should make it worse.

I also pointed out that in any event the present time was probably peculiarly ill-suited for any such step on our behalf. Wavell had just taken charge and we should await developments. Very probably there would be none—Still one could not rule them out.

Vallabhbhai said that he too sensed dangers in the proposed step. The matter required full consideration and we should not act in a hurry. He felt that Bapu was bound to take some step—he could not remain passive and silent,—and we should wait for it.

Maulana said: What step can he take except to go in for a long fast and that would not do much good. Anyway he said that there was no immediate hurry and we might wait for two or three months.

There our talk ended then. I did not think it desirable to discuss this matter with anyone else. Vallabhbhai once mentioned to me that he did not at all like Maulana's proposal—It was full of danger—I agreed.

There was no doubt in my mind about it. My instinctive reaction was supported by a reasoned consideration, and my opposition and hostility grew. From whatever point I approached the question—national, international, Congress, communal, and personal, I arrived at the same conclusion that if we took any such step as indicated by Maulana

we would injure our cause and strengthen our opponents. All the responsibility for solving every problem would fall on us, without any power or opportunity to do so. The continuing pressure of events on the British Govt., on Jinnah & the Muslim League, on foreign opinion &c. (and I am convinced of this pressure, though I realise fully that it is not great at present) would end, and be diverted to us.

I came to the conclusion not only that we here (that is the members of the Working Committee) should not act in the way suggested by Maulana, but that even if we had the chance to meet Gandhiji we should not advise him on these lines. Of course I realised that if we met and conferred we would have to communicate with Govt. and give our reaction to what has happened and what is happening. Further that, in effect, we would appeal to the country not to indulge in C.D. and obviously, even more so, any violent activities — That in proper and balanced language might be done, though I was not quite clear how to do it. C.D. had not been started by us and we could not, in any event, accept Govt.'s case against us. Anyhow I did not see my way to withdrawal (otherwise than indicated above) of the August Resolution — That went against the grain completely and my whole being revolted against it.

After a few days' consideration by myself I went to Maulana and told him that I felt convinced that his proposal was risky and dangerous and would have exceedingly bad results on our people. We could not judge of this correctly having no contacts or sufficient data. The appraisal must be more or less instinctive. But such indication as was available pointed to my conclusion. Definite Congress reactions were not available. Nearly all our important colleagues were in prison — Those who were out could not express themselves frankly and fully or, if they did, no paper would publish their statements. But even non-Congress indications—the Liberals (Kunzru &c), Abdul Latif (of the Moslem League & Hyderabad)—even Mody & Sarkar—showed that no such step by us was desired by them. These people represent few, yet if even they think so, that is significant. How much more would others feel and say!

Maulana listened to me and did not argue. He said that we had better allow the matter to rest for the present and see how matters shaped themselves — And so it rests.

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Fundamentally, what Maulana's proposal led to was the giving up of the revolutionary outlook and activity and adopting the purely political approach — That by itself need not be rejected. The Congress has gone

backwards & forwards in the past between revolutionary activities (peaceful of course) and political activities. But there appears to me to be a vital difference now. First of all any reversion to pure politics would be the tamest and weakest variety, almost completely ineffective, *unless* some major change happens. Just to accept present conditions and creep back after what appears to everybody as a bad defeat, after in fact disowning our own past resolution, would leave us helpless, demoralised and without any clear objective. Govt. and their supporters, so also the communalists, would not only grow but see to it that we had little chance to function. The people as a whole would lose all spirit and vitality and in despair look elsewhere, or just sink into non-political activity. We have never in the past gone back on our decisions— Stopping C.D. was not going back on any real decision.

After the climax of August 1942 this would be a terrible anti-climax and would cause deep injury to the freedom movement. Being self-inflicted it would be far worse than any suppression by an outside agency. Inevitably it would cause cleavage in our ranks and bitterness of the most painful kind (the Irish parallel!). I am sure there are large numbers in the country who have become hardened and who would put up with anything rather than with what they consider humiliation of the cause and surrender to a hated enemy. The past fifteen months' happenings—how utterly bad they have been—cannot be forgotten, will not be forgotten.

I do not just see how we can revert, even if some of us wanted to, to normal politics so long as a vital change does not take place in the situation — What am I to do, if I was suddenly released and conditions continued as they are?

Nov. 11. Thursday

I sit down and think and reason: What must we do, what must we not do? Yet I know well that any vital action springs from the depths of being. All the long past of the individual and even the race has prepared the background for that psychological moment of action. All the racial memories, influences of heredity, thoughts and dreams and actions from childhood up, in their curious mix-up inevitably drive to that new action, which again becomes yet another factor influencing the future. Influencing, yes, partly determining, possibly even largely determining; and yet surely it is not all determination. There is some loop-hole somewhere.

However that may be, I have little doubt that irrepressible urges have pushed me into action in the past. In putting this in Hindustani the other day I used the word 'jazbat'³⁷³ जज्बात and yet, as I said it, it sounded wholly insufficient and ineffective—There may be emotion in it but surely there is far far more than the emotion of the moment. It is not a momentary impulse that changes the fabric of one's life, breaks up old contacts, hurls the old anchor far into the deep sea. It was not this that has led so many thousands of us to spend our lives in prison—In the long silences and dreadful monotony of jail, it is not the emotion that counts.

So I have acted and so have others acted in India during the past three and twenty years. Fifteen or sixteen months ago I knew that I would act as I did although I was disturbed and distressed at Bapu's trend of thought. Having tried hard to influence Bapu, to give a new direction to his thought, and having succeeded in this in some measure, yet I felt in my bones that I would rush ahead when the time came. And if action was to be indulged in, it must be full-blooded action; half-hearted attempts at activity were futile.

And now I know that, come what may, I shall resist submission to British authority in India. This may not be good politics or practical or reasonable—But any other course would be denial of all that I have stuck to in the past, a surrender of the spirit and the soul. Political organizations do not function so and perhaps the Congress may change its ways. Even so I do not see my way to follow it.

A few days ago I was reading Ashvaghosa's *Buddhacharita*³⁷⁴ and as I read Buddha's (or rather Siddhartha's for he was not the Buddha then) answer to the deputation that had come to beg him to return home, a thrill passed through me, almost an electric shock. "I would enter a blazing fire, but I would not enter my home with my goal unattained".

If that is my innermost feeling, am I strong enough to face the consequences, whatever they might be? I think so, though I cannot be sure—Am I prepared to give up all hope of gaining my objective during my lifetime, of remaining in the wilderness always, of reconciling myself to prison indefinitely, or many things that are far worse? I think I am ready for this, and if the conviction came upon me, that the future held nothing for me but this long fading away in prison, I would accept it. That would satisfy my inner urges, would be in keeping with what

373. Innate feelings.

374. An account of Buddha's life from his departure from the palace to his studies and meditation written in c. A.D. 100.

I have thought and said and done. And I would think wistfully that thus I was serving the cause of my own people and of the larger world.

I have no such convictions of course and I believe that I shall have to play, some time or other, another kind of act on life's stage. I am pretty sure that big changes will come in India and I cannot escape from shouldering the burden of responsibility that these will bring.

That may happen or not. But in either event it would be a betrayal of myself and what I have always considered India's cause and the world's, for me to humble and humiliate myself before British authority.

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Still one must think objectively trying to forget one's self. One must function as a political realist.

Thinking thus, it seems to me that whatever has taken place during the last year and a half and more has (as almost everything has) a credit and a debit side. Possibly if we had the chance of going back and re-shaping the past, we might act somewhat differently. But that cannot be.

We have failed in achieving our objective, or going appreciably nearer to it. But we have demonstrated to ourselves and to others that this question of India's freedom is no political game for us. Nonviolence or violence, we will not surrender on that issue. I have no doubt that the events of the past 15 months have created a deep and lasting impression on the Indian people, and to a lesser extent on people abroad. In India the whole background of our principal problems—political, economic, communal, princely—has been affected, though this perhaps is not so obvious just at present.

The debit side of the account is obvious enough; the credit side is not so apparent but I can see it and feel it. Events, in which our people have played a big part, have raised the whole question of India's future and India's relations with the outside world & with England in particular, on to a different plane. There is much clearer demarcation between the lackeys and opportunists and those who stand for political & economic change.

The Bengal famine has been the final epitaph of British rule and achievement in India.

These past events, as well as the famine, must have led all communalists & feudalists to think furiously. The talk of partition in India or of feudal enclaves becomes even more ridiculous—

The Muslim League has reached a climax of prestige and authority, partly because of a growing strength but much more so because of the

British Government's backing and encouragement.³⁷⁵ It cannot go further up because that would mean a further surrender by the British in its favour and that they will not and cannot indulge in—Already a decline in the strength of the League is visible—inner rifts—incapacity to deal with any problem—Of course it has never had any constructive programme. It has lived and fattened on abuse of the Congress.

Now, with the Congress out of the picture and with several provincial govts. apparently under the League's direction, a negative policy creates discontent even amongst its own ranks, which have more than a fair share of sheer opportunists—

Today thus events are weakening both the British Govt.'s structure in India & the Muslim League—They will continue to work inexorably in this direction.

If we (the Congress) surrendered and went out of prison in humiliation & sackcloth & ashes, we would have little power to achieve anything, but our very release would shift responsibility on us to solve all these problems. Jinnah would immediately seek to get out of his troubles by raising the Congress bogey & cursing it with bell, book & candle. The Muslim public now becoming conscious of the League's incapacity & failings would, for a while, forget them—And so on.

Vis-a-vis the Govt. all manner of new suggestions and controversies will rise, hiding the real issues. And the Indian members of the Govt. of India would probably gain some prestige or at any rate some justification.

Of course there is another side to the picture also. But I am convinced that we can only go out honourably and holding to our basic position. No sackcloth & ashes, no withdrawals &c. I feel that we are serving the cause of India even by remaining in prison, much as I dislike this inactivity. Events (and we) have brought matters to a pass when half-way houses are ruled out. I entirely disagree with Rajagopalachari's analysis³⁷⁶ and his hysterical fear that if nothing happens

375. The Muslim League had formed ministries in Assam, Sind and the North West Frontier Province while in Bengal Nazimuddin, a supporter of the League, became Premier.

376. In his speeches at this time Rajagopalachari advised the country to take advantage of the British assurance that the Cripps offer still stood. If the road to independence via the Cripps offer seemed toilsome, that was a difficulty inherent in the Indian situation. The demand for independence was shared by various communities, none of which was prepared to realise it with a sacrifice of its own particular interests. No party in India could expect the British to subjugate one community in order to enable another to enjoy freedom on its own terms.

fairly soon, all is lost. Nothing is finally lost so long as India's spirit is unbroken and unsubdued. Everything is lost for the time being at least if that spirit fails.

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Then there is the question of Bapu—What is he thinking, what does he intend doing? I cannot imagine his remaining inert and passive indefinitely. The burden is his and he must be conscious of it. Apart from the political developments, he must be terribly distressed by the famine. It is obvious that he has been writing to the Govt. of India on this subject. Certain vague references have appeared in the papers.

What can he do? What else but fast and fast to death? Perhaps he is waiting for the new Viceroy to function. Giving him some time before taking any step.

Nov. 12, Friday

When Ranjit's translation of the *Ritusamhara* in typescript came to me, my mind went back to my own manuscript—what I had written in Dehra jail in 1941. Perhaps I could get it here, I thought—I had no desire to continue it in an autobiographical form. I had reached the Congress ministries' period. I am no longer interested in that remote period.

But I am interested in the survey of India's history & cultural outlook which took up several chapters of that unfinished book. Could I revise them here and add to them. They would need a great deal of revision for new ideas have entered my mind since I wrote those chapters.

So I have written to Indu to send me a typed copy of that MSS. If it is allowed through, well and good. If not, also well and good.

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For some days I have been thinking of making a draft of a provisional will. I had not at any time thought of this till within four or five days of my arrest on the last occasion. Kamalnayan³⁷⁷ suggested then that I should do so. I felt there was something in it. But there was

377. Kamalnayan Bajaj (1912-1974); son of Jammalal Bajaj; participated in Dandi March; jailed in 1932; for some time treasurer of All India States' People's Conference.

no chance then. Nor indeed is there any chance of my doing so for a long time—till I am out again—and who knows what the conditions will be then.

Why should I make a will? Father did not and there was no difficulty. I have far less to will away and possibly I might have practically nothing at all by the time of my death. There is the house, of course, and some shares and investments, which have been gradually vanishing during the past twelve and a half years since father's death. For I have been living partly on capital. Income from royalties on books &c has helped, otherwise the capital would have vanished utterly some time ago.

Normally speaking I shall spend this capital in the course of the next few years—Prison means a saving for I spend far less. It may be that as a consequence of the changes due to the war no capital will be left. Anyway there is precious little of it, nothing to shout about—though from Indian poverty standards it may be considered to be substantial.

The principal object of writing a will was, however, to avoid any legal complications in case of my sudden death. One never knows what might happen. Indu would be my heir. But her marriage, which is not strictly legal under the present law, might create difficulties. So it was considered desirable to have a proper will and testament.

What have I to will away? The house and all it contains, certain investments and cash with Bachhraj & Co., and certain other amounts loaned for khadi work to the Gandhi Ashram, Meerut. Also the money advanced or loaned to the *Herald*—Further some royalties.

As for the money given to the *Herald*, it might well be written off. So also the amount lent to the Gandhi Ashram. Something remains with Bachhraj—a diminishing amount.

The house? For some years now I have toyed with the idea of giving it away either to the Kamala Memorial Hospital or for some children's home. That idea cannot take shape now or for a considerable time, and anyhow there are difficulties. I must have some resting place, some anchorage—To become homeless would add greatly to my difficulties and make for inefficiency in work. Where would all my belongings, books &c. go to? The house also represents a certain family tradition. It is 'home' not only for me and Indu, but for Nan and Betty. It is a centre of activity. So it is no easy matter to part with it.

In making a will I should have liked to make some token provision for Nan & Betty. Not that they stand in particular need of it, but I have always felt that I had no business to be father's sole heir.

Then there is Ladli Bhai who has really helped me enormously by his looking after our affairs during my long periods in prison.

And Upadhyaya and Hari—also some old servants besides Hari.

To provide for all these even now would leave little over. Later it may become still more difficult to do so. I do not know even approximately what my assets are. So any draft will can only state that Indu is my heir.

One other matter I want to mention in my will—the disposal of my body after death—I want it cremated, of course, wherever I might die. I do not want any religious ceremonies to be performed. I should like a handful of ashes to be thrown into the Ganga, and the rest to be taken up in a plane and thrown over Indian soil. The Ganga comes in for no religious reason but for a sentimental attachment to the river of India round which our cultural history is so closely intertwined. Also because I was born, and grew up and lived near its banks and I am very fond of her.

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All these thoughts come to me now, more than at any other time, as my birthday is very near. Somehow birthdays make one think of such matters, especially birthdays after the half-century.

Nov. 13, 1943

Darling Indu,

There has been a gap in your letters and I have not had any for just a fortnight today. Your last letter was No. 34. (This is my No. 36.) I hope this simply means that you are busy renovating and putting new life into Anand Bhawan—That is a big enough job and a tiring one. But it is worthwhile and it must interest you. Now that the weather in Allahabad has become pleasanter and the sun is not too hot, I hope you will potter about in the open in the mornings and evenings. Good for the garden but even better for you. Gardening in the cool of the morning with the sun just pleasantly warm is health-giving. The sun and the soil between them are fine tonics and exhilarate. But do not overdo it, and certainly not if you feel at all tired.

I am sending back to you some old foreign periodicals—*Time*, *Reader's Digest*, *Common Sense*, *Listener* &c. Also a copy of *Tomorrow* edited by Raja Rao & Ahmad Ali.³⁷⁸ Two copies of this little hook managed to reach me, so I am sending one along to you.

378. Writer in Urdu and author of *Twilight in Delhi*.

Betty has sent me a number of new books. She has also sent a book to Mahmud, a good book which many of us will read but only Mahmud will be unable to do so, for the type is exceedingly small. It is Ilya Ehrenburg's³⁷⁹ *Fall of Paris*. Kripalani has also got a new stock of books. So for the present we are well provided with literature or at any rate interesting reading matter.

Why do you not invite some of your friends to pay you visits and stay in Anand Bhawan for a few days or weeks at a time? They could come one after the other, or together. This habit of people visiting each other—outside the family circle and except for so-called festive occasions—is not common in India. It should be encouraged. I am sure your friends will enjoy their visits and you will have agreeable company.

Do you know anything about Krishna's niece³⁸⁰ who lives down away in Malabar somewhere? About two years ago or more she had to come to the U.P. for some examination. Her mother (Krishna's sister)³⁸¹ wrote to *Puphi* or to me about her. Then I wrote to the girl asking her to stay in Anand Bhawan when she came that way, and she was vastly excited at the prospect. I forget what happened. I think she came but I was not in Allahabad then and so I did not meet her.

You have plenty of friends in Bombay, Lahore, Delhi and elsewhere. You have not met them for a long time. A little hospitality shown to them and a few days' pleasant companionship will be welcomed. It is true that travelling is a difficult job nowadays and not to be lightly undertaken; also that most people are occupied with their own work. Even the mood for outings is absent. Yet it may be worthwhile. Ismet for instance—Kupton's wife—whose guests we have been often enough.

Ever since I came here I have had no news of Uma Bhabi. Where is she? In prison?

I suppose you have not heard from Sarvar or Hamida, Mahmud's daughters.

I am anxious about Raja—Betty writes that he has been having repeated and very painful attacks of asthma and has lost 22 pounds in weight. He was frightfully lanky and thin to begin with. What he must look now, I find it difficult to imagine.

By the way, among the books that might be sent to me at some future time is Laski's: *The State in Theory & Practice*. You ought

379. (1891-1967); Russian novelist, poet and journalist. *The Fall of Paris* (1941) deals with the Second World War in Western Europe.

380. Janaki Sethna.

381. V. A. Janaki Amma.

to find it in my room—a copy given to me by Laski and inscribed by him.

Last week I sent you some lines from Ghalib. The following are a continuation of the same series:

یہ پری چہرہ لوگ کیسے ہیں ؟ غمزہ و عشوہ و ادا کیا ہے ؟
 سبزہ و گل کہاں سے آئے ہیں ؟ ابر کیا چیز ہے ہوا کیا ہے ؟
 ”ہاں بھلا کر ترا بھلا ہوگا“ اور درویش کی صدا کیا ہے ؟
 (غالب)

غالب: यह परी चेहरा लोग कैसे हैं ? गमजा ओ इशवा ओ अदा क्या है ?
 सब्जा ओ गुल कहां से आए हैं ? अब क्या चीज है, हवा क्या है ?
 “हां भला कर तेरा भला होगा” और दरवेश की सदा क्या है ?³⁸²

गमजा = wink; इशवा = beauty's coquetry; सब्जा = grass; अब = mist, fog; दरवेश = a wandering faqir; सदा = cry.

The *darvesh's* cry, as given, was frequently heard in the streets. It has been well fitted in.

I have had a letter from Amma from Benares. I shall write to her next week.

Love

Your loving
 Papu

Nov. 20, Saturday

Another birthday has come and gone — my fourth consecutive birthday in jail — Betty sent me some books and Amrita Shergil's pictures (some reproductions)—These pictures made me think of Amrita a great deal and I felt sad.

382. Ghalib: What are these fairy-faces
 And their elegance, charm and grace?
 Whence this foliage green
 And the smiling rose have come?
 What are these care-free floating clouds?
 And what is this gentle breeze?
 'Ever do good
 And thou shalt be done good too!
 What cry but this can a dervish raise?

Mahmud produced some presents even in prison — a cigarette box &c.— He appears to attach more importance to my birthday than almost anyone else —

Pantji repeated last year's performance. He arranged for a large number of flower garlands — one big one and a dozen smaller ones — At tea time the garlanding process took place: Maulana giving me the big one. The jailer joined in with a garland also.

Sendak, the Supdt., sent a birthday cake with 54 marked upon it—

And so the day passed and I felt suitably older. How have I changed during this past year? I think I have changed both physically and mentally. Physically it is easier to judge—I am markedly thinner, having lost about 16 pounds of weight. Now I am 127 lbs., slightly underweight. I feel lighter. I am fit.

Mentally? How can I judge? Yet I think I have developed a little more poise and equilibrium—a calmness of spirit which does not easily get upset, or upset for long. But is this a desirable calmness or is it just breaking-in of long residence in jail? The lack of vitality that comes from dull and unvarying routine? I do not know—Perhaps it is both — Only the future will tell.

x

x

x

x

Today I received my manuscript of Dehra jail—My mind began immediately to take a new turn —vague thoughts of writing — But I do not think I shall do any writing work for yet awhile. I must allow the mind to get used to the idea. Perhaps in the new year I might begin —

But another difficulty is appearing — something that might completely upset my composure and make all quiet writing work almost impossible.

x

x

x

x

We have had an unusual time during the past five or six days. My routine has been disturbed, I have hardly spun, have read little. Partly this has been due to my spending more time in the garden. But the major reason has been something entirely different.

On the 15th morning Maulana said he wanted us all to meet that afternoon for a talk. So we met in the most convenient place — Pantji's room.

Maulana came out with his proposal about writing to Govt.— What he had told Vallabhbbhai and me a fortnight or so earlier. He spoke

for an hour and a quarter—Was definite but still not convincing—that is to say, his presentment of the proposal was not particularly good. That ended the first day's session. I was asked to say something the next day.

I spoke for an absurdly long time—an hour and a half—discursive not concise but definite in opposition to Maulana's suggestion. On the whole I carried on quietly, as I wanted to, but occasionally broke out into heroics! Kings discrowned become outlaws not ordinary citizens &c.³⁸³ (memories of some lines by W.S. Blunt). I think some phrases of mine rather irritated Maulana—But the danger zone was passed without mishap.

Vallabhbhai followed me briefly then and continued the next day. Strong, pointed, clear and not too long. He has got a lucid mind, though it may not be deep. He holds to certain anchors and has a strong practical sense—He opposed Maulana's proposal.

Pantji—clear, moderate in expression, brief but definite enough—what occasion had arisen for this move. Dangers, risks—

Profulla Babu—Strong & rather unrestrained language. He would rather take potassium cyanide (and advise all of us to take it!) rather than agree to any such humiliating course of action—

Shanker Rao also strong in opposition. Ended up by appealing to Maulana to uproot the idea from his mind and throw it away.

Narendra Deva, academical, theoretical, professional. I like Narendra Deva more and more but he is so lacking in contact with reality, lives in theories—However—his conclusion was the same as mine and the others.

Kripalani and Mehtab had nothing to add.

Then Mahmud—beside the point, emotional, appealing—Find a way out &c. Communal situation.

Asaf—clever—instead of discussing matter in issue complained that we were insulting Maulana by suggesting that he could make a proposal which was humiliation to ourselves, the Congress or the country.

This turn given by Asaf worried and annoyed Vallabhbhai—He mentioned it to me. The next day (that is yesterday 19th Nov.) Shanker Rao wanted to say something about it, Vallabhbhai chimed in saying that it was impossible to have frank talk if such insinuations were made. Maulana, however, asked them to listen to him first and then to have their say.

383. "What is this prate of friendship? Kings discrowned
Go forth not citizens, but outlawed men."

(The previous afternoon, after everybody had had his say, I had begun again — As there was no time left I decided to continue the next day. I took pains to write down the argument in a concise form, and dealt with various criticisms of Mahmud & Asaf as well as with other matters, in a 12-page note!³⁸⁴ But I had no chance owing to other developments.)

Maulana spoke for an hour and 40 minutes. He was obviously angry, more especially with Shanker Rao and Profulla for some of their remarks the day before which he considered derogatory to himself. He let himself go — said hard things — repeated himself — was rather bullying (the worst possible attitude if one is trying to convince). He explained his proposal more fully — dealt with the possible consequences.

And then threw out a very remarkable and significant hint about the communal problem. This was that we should tone down a little towards Govt. (not giving up our position in any way but still—) and then with its help we shall be able to solve the problem easily.

This took my breath away for it opened out new vistas, entirely new approaches. If this was the objective then obviously the old arguments, built on different premises, hardly applied.

Maulana stopped. Profulla & Shanker Rao then spoke very warmly in their own defence and objecting strongly to Maulana's remarks — Maulana in reply toned down somewhat —

An unsavoury episode. Profulla & Shanker Rao had not been happy in their original remarks but obviously they meant no offence — Profulla Babu's manner is often very irritating — He smiles at the wrong moment and appears to look round for applause. But Maulana went very far in his chastisement and created a bad impression —

Everybody hard and stiff & strained. Vallabhbhai quiet but obviously angry.

So ended five days talks. We continue today!

Nov. 20, 1943

Darling Indu,

Your letters Nos. 35 and 36 have reached me. Also some books (*Life & Letters*, 2 numbers, *All Parties Committee's Report*, *Recent Judgments*), periodicals, foot-rug and the chopsticks, unbroken. Thank you.

384. Not available.

You need not have rushed about to send these to me with Feroze just as he was going to Bombay. There is never any hurry for the books or other articles I mention to you. We do not live in a world of hurry here. Time moves slowly and at a dead level without ups and downs. I mention to you odd things as the whim seizes me, not requiring them urgently or, indeed, at all, but just for variety's sake. Especially old books, such as Milton, as I did in my last letter. I have enough and more to carry on for a long time but old habit persists. When I mention a book or anything else, I want you just to note it down and send it at leisure.

So I am mentioning another book. I have been reading a book by Charles Morgan.³⁸⁵ That put me in mind of another book of his—*Sparkenbroke*—which was sent to me long ago by Louise Morin. I read part of it then but was too busy to finish it and then I forgot all about it. It struck me that I might as well read it through now, not only because the book is likely to be interesting but also because Louise sent it and I owe it to her to read it. So if you can find it—it is likely to be in my room—you can send it along.

Have you had any kind of news of Louise and Jean-Jacques?

Odd, this reading of books. Once upon a time—this fairy story beginning is suitable—long long ago, when I had recently come back to India from Cambridge &c., I thought of the large number of books I wanted to read and of the little time I had for reading. Could I take myself away, I wondered, to some quiet retreat, preferably on the hills, for a year and just lose myself in books? It seemed one of those idle fancies which come and go, leaving a faint regret behind them, for it is so difficult to act up to them. No fancy or day dream then gave me a glimpse of the future; no shadow of what was to come fell on my mind's track. The years that followed saw that old fancy realised in a curious way, and it was not just a year but many years that I spent in retreats (shall we call them so?) and I had plenty of time to read. And even now the hunger is not satisfied and all these years seem just a beginning, a peep on the threshold of the world's books. Did I think then, in the pride and confidence of early youth, that a year would be enough? Even a lifetime now seems just a step on the long road winding ahead.

So you have made friends with Venus, the morning star. Every morning now I think of you as I wake up and see this bright star gazing down upon me. You cannot mistake it; it is far the brightest of

385. (1894-1958); an English novelist whose works include *The Fountain* and *The Judge's Story*.

all the stars and the planets. After some time it will disappear gradually, that is, it will rise with the sun or later and will not be seen in the daylight. And then after an interval it will re-appear as the evening star, bright as ever, just as the day merged into the night, the two just meeting only to part. That time of dusk or twilight is called संध्या³⁸⁶ in Sanskrit — from संधि³⁸⁷ the meeting. From this the Hindi variations संध्या³⁸⁸ and even शाम³⁸⁹ I suppose.

In Arabic Venus is called Zohra, a name you know. This means the bright, the beautiful. In Sanskrit it is called शुक्र³⁹⁰— hence शुक्रवार³⁹¹ Friday which is the day of Venus.

There is another planet in evidence now — Jupiter. This is also fairly bright, though nowhere near the brightness of Venus. It rises a couple of hours earlier. One night I made a silly mistake. I woke up and saw Jupiter at the usual place where Venus appears to greet me. In my half-sleep I mistook it for Venus and decided it was time to get up — about 5 o'clock. I sat up and prepared to get out of bed when, just as a matter of routine, I looked at my watch. It was only 2.30 then. I suspected that the watch had stopped but soon I realised my mistake and went back to bed and sleep.

I am glad you have got Khaliq with you. Did he get a rise in salary or allowance when our other servants got this? I ask this as he was on *Puphi's* pay list. Anyway see to it that he is properly paid and does not suffer for his faithful service and loyalty to us. Tell Ladli *chacha* to add his name, as well as Tulsi's, on the monthly salary bill.

I think it would be a good thing if you could get a car. That of course presupposes that you can get petrol. You must not be cooped up in the house. Go out, meet people and don't be all the time alone and all by yourself. I have not owned a car now for a dozen years. I did not need one particularly, as I seldom left the house, and could usually have *Pupha's* car when I wanted it—Is *Pupha* keeping his car running? If so, what about the chauffeur?

I am glad you have spread out your furniture in Anand Bhawan. That is good for your furniture and good for Anand Bhawan. Why do you not try your hand at changing the old look of my room? I have got used to it after all these years, but it is rather like a godown!

386. *Sandhya*.

387. *Sandhi*.

388. *Sanjha*.

389. *Sham*.

390. *Shukra*.

391. *Shukrawar*.

I wrote to you long ago about Dr. Mahmud's daughters. You wrote to either Sarvar or Hamida and apparently had no answer. I should like you to try again. Sarvar is with her husband somewhere in Chota Nagpur. She continues to be ill and I have strongly advised Mahmud to have her sent to our hospital for treatment. It is difficult to move these people. They fall into certain ruts and remain there. Mahmud's son Said is also ill in Chapra. You might write to Hamida (who is in Chapra). Invite her and her younger sister Qudsia (age 14) to spend some days with you in Anand Bhawan. One of their brothers can accompany them. They can also see the hospital and then write to their mother or to Sarvar about it. Or Sarvar can come straight off, spend a few days in Anand Bhawan and then shift to the hospital.

Qudsia wanted me to tell her the names of some easy books in English to read, story books &c. I do not know what she is likely to understand. If she comes to Anand Bhawan, give her some children's books or others, of which there are so many about. Even if she cannot come, you can send her some books.

I do wish you could manage to get the girls to come to Anand Bhawan. If Mrs. Mahmud could come also, it would be good for her. She leads a lonely life in Chapra and a change would benefit her. Also if she saw the hospital, she would agree more easily to send Sarvar. So invite the family and at any rate insist on the girl. I should like you to help them and cheer them up as much as possible. In writing letters address them C/o Dr. Syed Mahmud, Huq Manzil, Chapra, B.N.W. Ry. You can write in English to Hamida or Qudsia. But Mrs. Mahmud can only be addressed in Urdu. Perhaps you might get a letter from her in Urdu.

Betty has sent some books and some pictures by Amrita Shergil which Kitabistan have issued on behalf of the Allahabad Roerich Centre. I like some of these pictures. Even more so they remind me of Amrita. Did you ever meet her? I saw her only half a dozen times, usually at intervals of a year, but I grew to like her very much. She was unusual and was obviously very gifted. She wanted to do a sketch of me but this never came off. Just before my arrest in October 1940 I happened to be in Gorakhpur (it was for that speech in Gorakhpur that I was arrested and sentenced to 4 years). I was very busy but I managed to fit in a hurried visit to a sugar factory about 18 miles from the town. Amrita was living with her people there and I went especially to see her. I was there for only a few minutes and then she motored back with me to Gorakhpur. A strange change had come over her since her return from France four years earlier. She was so full of confidence, so vital and self-possessed then; life was a straight and easy job except

for those who were afraid. This self-assurance was no longer in evidence and life did not appear quite so simple or straight. She was quiet. Artistically, that is in relation to her art, she was also changing. From painting typical French *salon* pictures she was drifting to India in many ways. I asked her to come for a few days to Allahabad and she promised to do so. . . . I was arrested. The day after my release from Dehra Dun I heard on the radio that she had suddenly died. There was some mystery about it. Her poor mother went wild with grief; indeed she became quite demented and made extraordinary charges against some people.

I had quite a shock. She was not the kind of person one meets often. It was very sad that one so gifted should die in early youth.

My birthday! Yes, it is over and gone—Nothing to shout about. It struck me that it was my fourth consecutive birthday in prison, apart from the other such days I have spent in prison. I have lost count of the number.

In your letter of Nov. 8, towards the end, a small paragraph of 4 lines has been blacked out. What this was about I cannot guess.

Tell Bachhraj not to worry about my income tax refunds. They can hold on to the certificates till such time, if ever, when they can be of some use.

I shall give you a respite from Urdu verses this week, and for this, I imagine, you will offer grateful thanks. Fact is, time is up and this letter must go now.

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 37.

Nov. 21. *Sunday*—1943

The week's debauch of political talks and arguments is over. After six days of it—six afternoons—we rest. There is a possibility of future discussions but not for a while—no date fixed.

Yesterday not much happened—There was a feeling of anti-climax—Maulana said a few words so did some others—Then I took some time with an analysis of the possible consequences of Maulana's original proposal—pointing out its risks & dangers at present at least—A flash of

irritation of Vallabhbhai and Kripalani against me for my 'superiority complex' and supposed suggestion that others knew nothing of world affairs—It was partly due to a misapprehension and it passed. But my presumption in posing as the sole authority on international affairs is no doubt irritating.

Feelings are toned down though a slight soreness remains. Even that will gradually pass but what will not pass and cannot pass is the mental gap between various members of the W.C. It is really difficult to discuss any important matter because of suspicion and prejudice that immediately raise their heads. To criticise any step taken by Bapu is *lese majeste*. That is the hiatus between the so-called Gandhiite members of the W.C. and the others.

Then there are other varieties of different approaches, for instance between Maulana & me—I always feel at a slight disadvantage in discussing anything with him. I cannot adopt my usual free and easy manner as this might rub him up the wrong way. There are certain formalities to be approved—not many but still they do constrain—More important is the difference in psychological background. He has an astonishing mental grasp and a prodigious memory—But the 18th and 19th centuries cling to him.

Pant, I think, is the easiest person to talk to. He has understanding of modern problems and his mind is keen. I had a long talk with him last night and felt the better for it. At least I could unburden myself to someone.

x

x

x

x

So now after all this discussion—where are we? In Ahmadnagar Fort of course! Here we remain. But the talks have done me good and enabled me to judge of the mental processes of my colleagues of the W.C.

How clear it is that it is unfair to them & unfair to me for me to belong to the W.C. with them! But then this has been clear enough for a long time—yet events have so conspired as to keep me there. I wish I had not remained in it—

x

x

x

x

Sendak, the Supt., has gone off to Bombay on a week's leave—So we are in charge of the jailer. The Civil Surgeon now will come daily during Sendak's absence.

x

x

x

x

To mark the beginning of a new year of my life, I took various measurements today—On the last occasion I took them on August 10, 1943, (on page 230 *ante*) nearly three and a half months ago. Here they are:

On 21/11/43

Weight	127 pounds (on 16/11)
Chest	33 (breath out), 35 (normal), 37 (filled in, expanded)
Waist	28 (drawn in at navel), 30 (normal), 32 (puffed out at navel), 27½ (drawn in above navel), 29½ (normal above navel), 32 (puffed out above navel)
Hips	34
Thigh	20½, 18½ (at mark)
Calf	12½
Upper arm (biceps &c.)	10½ stretched—11½ (bent)
Forearm	10

On 10/8/43

Weight	132 lbs.
Hips	35½
Upper arm	12½

Reduction in weight 5 lbs. during last 3 months, and 12 lbs. during last 11 months—16 lbs. since we came here 15½ months ago. Hips and biceps also less—otherwise no marked change.

Thus far the body which can be weighed & measured. What of the changes in the mind and spirit? Certainly I must be changing with layer upon layer of experience and abnormal living in jail and the host of thoughts that surround me.

23-11-43

Darling Bets,

I have received two letters from you, dated 7th and 16th Nov.—and the lovely gifts you have sent. Half a dozen books reached me a fortnight ago (Andre Maurois, Theodor Brook, Khalil Gibran, John Kendall, Eustace Stopler and *Tomorrow*)—later I got the two books by Pearl Buck and Jim Phelan's *Jail Journey*.³⁹² Also Amrita Shergil's pictures.

Pearl Buck's books are always welcome. *Jail Journey* I knew and

392. A book about English prisons written by a man who served 13 years of a life sentence in jail.

had read previously and liked it. Indeed I like it so much that I have read through it for a second time now. It is interesting for anyone, but for one with a long experience of Indian jails, it is particularly interesting and revealing. It made me happy to get this book from Yusuf. Will you thank him for it and give him my love?

Amrita's pictures pleased me greatly. Partly because I like them, partly because they reminded me of her. I grew quite fond of her and her sudden death was a shock.

The *tika* you sent me was put on my forehead by Pantji on my birthday.

In your letter of the 7th Nov. over four lines at the bottom of page two have been blacked out. Presumably referring to Raja.

I am very glad Raja is with you and I was happy to see some lines in his handwriting at the end of your letters. Proper food and environment have a tremendous influence on asthmatic patients and the change, I hope, will soon benefit him. You will, of course, consult doctors, have him X-rayed and carry out the instructions given. But anyhow he must put on weight and thus increase his powers of resistance to disease.

A little later, after Raja's treatment is settled and he has rested sufficiently, a visit to Allahabad might do him good. The climate there in December and January is bracing and far better than that of Bombay. You should remain with him.

I am glad Psyche gave you some of the stuff made out of my yarn. If I had continued on with my spinning here during the past year I could have produced a fair quantity of yarn. But I could not develop the mood for it and there was much else to do. I started spinning, in a small way, in September last, about half an hour a day. Even so there are frequent gaps.

Mahmud was greatly touched by your gift of Ilya Ehrenburg's novel (*The Fall of Paris*) to him. He wants me to thank you particularly and sends you his love—also to Raja. We had reviews of the book and wanted to get it. So it is greatly welcomed here. There is one snag however. The type is so small that it is almost beyond Mahmud. Any attempt by him to read it for long will lead to trouble. So others are likely to profit by the book more than he does. His eyes give him a great deal of trouble.

Love to Raja and you.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

Nov. 27, 1943

Darling,

I have your letter No. 37 of Nov. 14. I have also received my manuscript or rather typescript of Dehra Jail. Betty has sent me two books, one on your behalf and the other on Psyche's, as birthday gifts. Your gift—Havell's³⁹³ *Ideals of Indian Art*³⁹⁴—was particularly appropriate as I have long wanted to read it. It is not a new book for it came out, I think, roundabout 1920. But these years have been busy years for me and I missed it. I like Havell's approach. It is vivid and interesting, though not always wholly reliable.

Psyche's present is a fat 800-page book by the Beards of America—*The American Leviathan*³⁹⁵—a very leviathan of a book! Yet on a subject which interests me and I shall certainly read it. Only recently I read the two fat volumes of Beards' *Rise of American Civilization*. (Mrs. Naidu's copy which Betty got for me through Padmaja).

Three countries interest me greatly at present—apart from my own—These are the U.S.A., the U.S.S.R. and China—Each of these attracts me for some different reason, for they are so different from each other. Yet essentially I think of them as countries with a big future and countries which are bound to influence us here in a variety of ways. Somehow Europe does not attract me so much now. There is a lack of vitality, of freshness about it; far too much of the old ruts—very pleasant and comfortable ruts, some of them, but nevertheless ruts. Perhaps just because I have been so much influenced by Europe, till it has become a part of me, that I am reacting in this way now. I want fresh fields, fresh avenues of thought, fresh reactions. I do not get these in Europe or from Europe now. But I do get them from America, Russia & China, though China is different of course. China is continually reminding me of India but in a curious way, a looking-glass way, where things are the same in many ways and yet different. China often helps me to understand India more, both appreciatively and critically. Somehow I cannot rid myself of the thought that we shall have a great deal to

393. E. B. Havell (1861-1934); a former principal of the Government School of Art and Keeper of the Art Gallery, Calcutta; author of *Indian Sculpture and Painting*, *Benares the Sacred City* and many other books.

394. This book argues that the intention of Hindu art is "to make the central ideas of the Hindu religion and philosophy intelligible...to the unlettered but not unlearned Hindu peasant as well as the intellectual Brahmin."

395. *The American Leviathan: The Republic in the Machine Age* (1930); it describes the functions and methods of the American federal government.

do with these three countries in the future—America, Russia & China. I wish I knew them more intimately and personally, but then my education is sadly incomplete. I make up for it by the reading of books, and so I welcome books which tell me of the past and present background of these three vast countries.

Hari and Khaliq remembering my birthday and their good wishes pleased me. They have been very good and loyal during all these years and I think of them more as members of the household than as servants. I remember long ago when I returned from England, after my so-called educational course there, Hari, a young boy, was allotted to me as a personal servant. Khaliq came a few years later as a cleaner for our cars, subsequently developing into a chauffeur—what has happened to Khaliq's daughter? She was a bright little kid and I hope her school-going has continued. I should like to help her in this, apart from Khaliq's salary.

I wish you would renovate and re-arrange Anand Bhawan completely, not waiting for my return. If you are full of ideas, why not give effect to them now while you have the leisure and chance to do it? The future may demand other activities from us and we may not be able to spare the time. As for consulting me, I am not particularly good at this kind of thing, and my mind is likely to be elsewhere. I should like to return and see Anand Bhawan in a new garb. Any major expenditure just at present will perhaps not be desirable and it is not easy to obtain many things that might be required. But within the framework of what we have, plus such things as are easily obtainable, something might be done—I agree about the Indian drawing room.

My spinning has not progressed lately. There has been a long gap. But I hope to go back to it. The cotton slivers which Psyche sent were none too good and the thread drawn from them was apt to snap. The very dry weather here helps in this. I do not want you to write to Psyche about this as I have been able to borrow better *punis* from Kripalani. I spin so little that I can easily share his *punis*. And Psyche's *punis* will also be used by some of our experts here. I am mentioning this matter as it struck me that if you are using this kind of *puni* your spinning must be a tiresome affair.

Do not trouble about the Dehra Dun hand-made paper. If you can get the stuff easily well and good. Keep it. You need not send it to me, at least for some time.

You mentioned in one of your letters that Mani Puthakasalai, publishers of Kumbakonam, wanted to publish a Tamil translation of my *Glimpses*. I do not think any arrangements have been made so far for a Tamil edition but I cannot be certain. There is a kind of register—

a big, long cloth-bound notebook which contains information about my various publications. You might find this in the steel cupboard which contains my old MSS and papers. Somewhere about the middle of it you will find a note of mine, written in 1940 which collects all the relevant information. I added to this subsequently.

I would like, of course, a Tamil edition of *Glimpses* to come out but I do not want to agree to any copyright or permission till I am assured that the publishers are efficient, business-like and have sufficient resources to carry through this task (the book is a big one). Also that the translation will be good and done by a competent person. I have had a lot of trouble with these translations, especially down Madras way, and I want to take no risks. If all these assurances are coming then I might agree. The usual terms are for translations: 10% royalty on price of books actually sold. This for the author. The translator should get 5% royalty but that is a matter for arrangement by the publisher.

In these days of shortage of paper, it is doubtful if any small publisher can undertake this job. Kumbakonam is hardly likely to be the headquarters of a big firm.

As I was writing this I received a packet of books sent by you including the *History of Russia* & 3 National Planning Committee booklets. Also *Life & Letters*—Gordon Bottomley.³⁹⁶

I have sent you three books and old periodicals. The books are:

- | | | |
|------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| 1. Shridharani | : | <i>My India, My America</i> |
| 2. Sitwell | : | <i>Escape with Me!</i> |
| 3. Julian Huxley | : | <i>Religion without Revelation</i> |

The following are also being returned:

- | | | |
|-----------------|---|--|
| 1. Liddell Hart | : | <i>The Strategy of Indirect Approach</i> |
| 2. Roerich | : | <i>Ficry Stronghold</i> |
| 3. Gibran | : | <i>The Mad Man</i> |
| 4. Ezra Pound | : | <i>Poems</i> |
| 5. Masfield | : | <i>Gautama</i> |
| 6. Kendall | : | <i>Dum Dum</i> |

The periodicals I returned to you are pretty ancient. Still *Pupha* might be interested in them, so you might send on these foreign magazines &c. to him.

I notice that Edward Thompson has come out with a new book: *The Making of the Indian Princes* (Oxford Univ. Press 20/-). Normally he would have sent this on to me. Anyway please note the name and

396. (1874-1948); English poet and dramatist who wrote plays on Shakespearean themes.

get it when you can. It is a new book and is not likely to have reached India yet—not the booksellers anyway.

Here are two Urdu couplets:

اس نے بھولے سے کیا نظر ڈالی
عمر ساری خراب کر ڈالی !

उसने भूले से क्या नज़र डाली
उम्र सारी ख़राब कर डाली !³⁹⁷

This is from some unknown rhymester. The next is from Zauq.³⁹⁸

گلہائے رنگ رنگ سے ہے زینت چمن
(ذوق) اے ذوق اس جہاں میں ہے زیب اختلاف سے

जौक़: गुलहाए रंग रंग से है ज़ीनत-ए-चमन
ऐ जौक़, इस जहां में है ज़ेब इख़तेलाफ़ से³⁹⁹

ज़ीनत = खुशनुमाई, खूबसूरती से उभारना; ज़ेब = खुशनुमाई.

I have received a letter from *Puphi* in which she gives distressing news of *Pupha's* illness—the acute pleurisy he was suffering from. This is a bad job, more so as he is not careful enough. It is astonishing that over a month in the Balrampur Hospital was not enough for such a simple diagnosis.

Tell *Puphi* that I have also received copy of Chand's letter dated 9th Sept. from Wellesley which she sent me.

Love

Your loving
Papū

Dec. 4, 1943

Darling Indu,

I have your letter No. 38 of Nov. 22nd. This is my No. 39.

So you have gone to Jaipur. Have you ever been there before? It is an attractive city famous for its town planning. I wonder if you will

397. Only a wanton glance
In her abandon did she cast;
But me it ruined at last!

398. Muhammad Ibrahim Zauq (1789-1854).

399. Zauq: Flowers of different hues
do this garden deck and adorn;
On the riot of colours alone, O Zauq,
rests the garden's grace!

visit Amber, the old fortress some miles out of Jaipur. Few places have reminded me so vividly of medieval times, of knights in armour, and chivalry and the Rajput of old legend as Amber did when I visited it many years ago. As I stood on one of the battlements, looking down on the winding path below, almost I could imagine myself back in the Middle Ages and see a train of Rajput knights on horseback riding up to the main gate of the fort.

Your account of the progress that the garden has made is quite exciting. Obviously this is your and Feroze's doing. A beautiful garden looks far lovelier if personal labour has gone into its making. Does not that apply to most things?

By the way do you know at all what is happening to the Swaraj Bhawan garden? Ask Feroze to have a look and find out. There used to be large quantities of vegetables there — who gets them?

I have received no letter from Feroze, so I imagine the letter he wrote was stopped. Why, I do not know, for I understand that in-laws, and especially a son-in-law, are on the approved list of those who can write and be written to. But all this is very vague. Till recently I wrote only to you, to *Puphi*, Betty and sometimes to Amma. Once or twice to Chand. For the first time I went beyond this circle and wrote to Ranjit *Pupha* some weeks ago. I was not sure that the letter would go through. But evidently it did, and so presumably a brother-in-law is approved. Why not a son-in-law?

I am sending back to you the dividend warrant for Rs. 40/- duly signed. You can send it to the Punjab National Bank, Allahabad branch, and ask them to cash it and credit it to my account. Let them also keep the income-tax certificate.

I suppose you know that letters addressed to me should now be sent to Bombay and not Poona. The Bombay Govt. has moved to Bombay.

Betty has sent me, as a birthday present, an ivory Nataraja, probably made in Travancore. It is a fine piece of work and, rather miraculously, it has reached me unbroken. I like it but it is not particularly suited to prison life. Delicate works of art do not fit in here.

As is my uncontrollable habit, I am giving a list of books below. This has been made out of reviews and catalogues and most of them, I am sure, are unobtainable here. Still you might note them down, and if you come across any of them later on, get it.

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| 1. Viscount Wavell | : <i>Allenby: A Study in Greatness</i> |
| 2. -Do- | : <i>Allenby in Egypt</i> |
| 3. Stefan Zweig | : <i>The World of Yesterday</i> |
| 4. Ilya Ehrenburg | : <i>Russia at War</i> |
| 5. H.G. Wells | : <i>You Can't be Too Careful</i> |

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| 6. Lionel Fielden | : <i>Beggar my Neighbour</i>
(Secker & Warbug 3/6) |
| 7. Lin Yutang | : <i>The Wisdom of China and India</i> |
| 8. L.H. Ajwani | : <i>Immortal India</i> (Educational
Publishing Co., Karachi) |
| 9. Dr. Quaritch Wales | : <i>Towards Angkor</i> (Harrap 1933) |
| 10. Reginald Reynolds | : <i>Cleanliness & Godliness</i>
(Allen & Unwin 12/6) |
| 11. Edith Sitwell | : <i>A Poet's Note Book</i> .
(Macmillan 10/6) |
| 12. Kate Mitchell | : <i>India</i> (Bodley Head) |
| 13. J.H. Breasted | : <i>The Dawn of Conscience</i>
(New York) |
| 14. Thomas Ryan | : <i>Men in Chains</i> (Peter Davies,
London 8/6) |

I am not sure of the full title of No. 1—Wavell's book. The 2nd book only came out in September in England & so can hardly have reached here — unless the Viceroy's books are rushed across.

Perhaps the easiest way will be for you to send the list to Kitabistan & see what they can get for you.

Did I write to you about *The Bible for Today* (or some such title)? This book used to be in my room. It was sent to me by the publishers. If found it can be added to the next convenient lot.

Here is an Urdu couplet by Atish:

سن تو سہی جہاں میں ہے ترا فسانہ کیا
(آتش) کہتی ہے تجھکو خلق خدا غائبانہ کیا

आतिश : सुन तो सही जहां में है तेरा फसान: क्या —
कहती है तुज को खल्क-ए-ख़दा गाएबान: क्या ? ⁴⁰⁰

फसान: = story; खल्क-ए-ख़दा = God's people, i.e., the public; गाएबान: = behind one's back.

Love to you and Feroze.

Your loving
Papu

400. Atish: Listen, if you please,
The tales they tell;
Do you know,
There, everywhere, what they say of you?

December 7, Tuesday

I have written out my will and testament!⁴⁰¹ I wrote a covering note—a long one—first on Dec. 3, and then followed up by the will which I completed on Dec. 4. The whole thing seemed rather unreal. But I am glad I have done it and put it by. It is off my mind now—

x x x x

Betty has sent me an ivory Nataraja. An unusual gift in prison and rather unsuited to this environment—also a risky business to send such a delicate piece of work. Surprisingly it survived the journey and there was no damage. It is a fine piece of work—

x x x x

Some days ago we met together in the afternoon to consider if it was possible for us to do anything in connection with the Bengal famine. This meeting arose out of some remarks made by Maulana on the occasion of our previous meeting—remarks which had hurt some people.

Long ago Maulana had spoken to me on this subject. He had suggested that we might ask Govt to cut down our rations by half and send the stuff or money saved to Bengal for famine relief. I had even then not understood how this could be done, and so the matter dropped.

After a full discussion it appeared to be the general view that, situated as we are, we really could not do anything. All our references in our letters home to the Bengal famine are blacked out—even those asking that every kind of help must be given and money contributed. I wrote to Indu and Nan repeatedly about this—result black-outs.

It is clear that Govt. will not allow us to send anything from here. They have adopted that policy in regard to other detenus & prisoners; much more so would it apply to us. So that any request of ours is bound to be turned down, and probably in an offensive manner.

The only question that remains is not of giving help to Bengal, but of easing one's own conscience by making a gesture or by reducing our diet without reference to the Government. To some slight extent our diet has been affected and we have avoided extras which might be considered as luxuries, such as sweets &c.

401. This first draft of his will and the note are not available.

We could see no way of tackling the problem from here and the general sense was no request or approach be made to Govt. on this or other subject. So the matter dropped.

x

x

x

x

Indu seems to be better now — She has gone to Jaipur for a week to see Bappi and Pyare —

7.12.43

Darling Bets,

I have your letter of the 26th Nov.—also the ivory Nataraja, diary, note-books, etc. — and Douglas Reed's *Downfall*. Thank you. The Nataraja is a fine piece of work and I like it. But it was brave of you to send it for the chances of its reaching me whole and unbroken were small indeed. Nevertheless, the unexpected has happened and it has reached me without any damage. It has taken a place on my table and it makes a difference, though it is hardly suited to a jail environment.

I hope Raja and you will go to Allahabad for a change. You could hardly have a better climate than Allahabad in December, though Raja might consider it cold.

Mahmud has received the magnifying glass and is excited about it. He wants me to thank you for it. Also to tell you that the gift he is looking forward to is a copy of your new book. We have heard so much about this book that we are all eager to read it. Will you send the book to the Bodley Head delay its publication there?

Love to you and Raja.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

December 11, 1943

Darling Indu,

I have not received any letter from you since I wrote last, but that was to be expected. There has been your visit to Jaipur and long railway

journeys. I hope you found Bappi and family well. I have not seen her children for a long time and they must have grown, as children insist on doing. I shall hardly be able to recognise them when I see them next. They used to be charming kids. Pyare must be absorbed in his work. He has plenty of energy and this is just the kind of activity that should suit him and give scope to his ideas, though Jaipur is not too big a place.

Last week I wrote to you that I had received no letter from Feroze. This passage in my letter has evoked a response from the mysterious individual who censors our letters in the Bombay Secretariat. A message has been conveyed to me that no letter from Feroze addressed to me was received or kept back. Further that a son-in-law is entitled to write.

A week or two ago I asked you to try to get for me a new book by Edward Thompson — *The Making of the Indian Princes*. I have just been told that this book has been sent to me direct by Edward. To make sure that it reached me, he sent it through the Viceroy. It has not reached me yet. I shall let you know when I get it, so that you can inform Edward.

The copy of Milton's poems has reached me. I had an odd sensation when I saw the presentation card stuck in it dated: Harrow: Lent Term 1906. Over 37 years ago, in the far-off past of my boyhood. Pictures of those days and other days that are gone rose up before me, and I thought of the great changes that have come over me. And then I thought of the future. What will India and the world be like in another 37 years? I shall not be there to see them, but you and your generation will no doubt see and compare, and all that is happening today will then be but a story of long ago — है आज जो सगुजस्त अपनी, कल इसकी कहानियाँ बनेंगी. It is well that time passes and brings healing and forgetfulness in its train. How few are the moments of exquisite delight when we would like to say: O Time, stay thy flight, O happy hours, remain with us, do not pass us by—

*O temps, suspends ton vol !
et vous, heures propices,
Suspendez votre cours !
Laissez-nous savourer les rapides delices
Des plus beaux de nos jours!*⁴⁰²

402. Oh time, suspend your flight!
And you, propitious hours, suspend your course!
Let us taste the swift delights of the fairest of our days!
(*Le Lac* by Alphonse De Lamartine.)

How few they are! And yet if, by some magic, that passing hour stayed on, and, like a painted picture, represented an unchanging and unchangeable moment, would not the very magic of that moment go, and we would weary even of sheer delight?

Here are some Urdu verses by Mir Dard⁴⁰³ who lived in Delhi in Shah Alam's time in the 18th and early 19th century.

تہمتیں چند اپنے اوپر دھر چلے کس لیے آئے تھے ہم کیا کر چلے
 شمع کی مانند ہم اس بزم میں چشم تر آئے تھے دامن تر چلے
 ساقیا یاں لگ رہا ہے چل چلو جس قدر بس چل سکے ساغر چلے
 (درد)

मीर दर्द:

तोहमतें चन्द अपने ऊपर धर चले — किसलिये आए थे हम, क्या कर चले ।

शम: के मानिन्द हम इस बزم में — चश्म तर आए थे, दामन तर चले ।

साकिया ! यां लग रहा है चल चलाओ — जिस कदर बस चल सके सागर चले ।⁴⁰⁴

तोहमत = false allegation (in Sufi or mystic's language even life is a तोहमत— Compare the idea of माया)⁴⁰⁵; शम: = light, flame; दामन तर = literally wetting the hem of the garment — This is frequently used in the sense of impurity — of life making us impure — dragging us into the mire; चश्म तर आए थे etc. — a comparison between the beginning and end of life and the light in the oil cup — The new-born babe cries and has wet eyes &c.; साकिया = The bearer of the wine cup — usually one who is admired or loved; सागर — cup — कटोरा — of wine.

In Sufi language wine drinking is frequently mixed up with devotion to God.

As I was writing the Urdu verses given above, I received the books sent by Edward Thompson. There are three of them:

- 1 *New Recessional & Other Poems*
- 2 *The Life of Charles Lord Metcalfe*
- 3 *The Making of the Indian Princes*

The first of these was sent to me by Edward last year and it reached

403. Mir Dard (1719-1785).

404. Mir Dard: Discrediting ourselves from here we go;
 What we came for
 But, alas, what we have here done!
 Like a taper in this assembly
 With tears of grief we had come,
 With soiled skirt from here we go!
 Death's in the market, Saqi,
 Keep the cup passing on
 So long as you can!

405. Illusion.

me here. The second (*Metcalf*) has also been previously sent to me by him. I wonder if you remember it, for it came to me some years ago bearing not only Edward's signature but your name also (Indu). You had gone to visit the Thompsons in their house on Boan Hill at Oxford and he made you sign and then sent on the book to me. I am very glad, however, that he has sent another copy to me for the earlier copy was lost much to my distress. I had read it very carefully and valued it. But in one of its journeys between Anand Bhawan and some jail it disappeared somewhere in the jailer's office. So I am very glad to have this second copy. The poems are very welcome. As for the new book I have been eagerly looking forward to it, as you know.

I want you to write to Edward Thompson and tell him that I have received these three books. No gift that I could have had here could be more welcome, nor could I have wished for a better inscription than what he has written in the book on the Indian Princes. I often think of him and of the bond of friendship that ties us. Such bonds have helped me greatly to keep sane and sober, and not to allow 'black thinking', as they call it very appropriately in the language of prison, to find a home in my mind.

Let me know how *Pupha* is keeping. I am anxious about his health. And how is Nora? Does she still get a rise in temperature? Give her my love.

I think of Anand Bhawan in the delightful cold of December, with the warm sun flooding the house and the garden with its cheerful presence; and you and Feroze busy in the garden and inside the house, improving them and changing their aspect; making them full of joyful life — another thought evokes many pictures in my mind, and I like them.

Love

Your loving
Papu

December 17, Friday

Betty's last letter, which came two days ago, had a curious sentence: "We heard yesterday that Ballo's *chote chacha* had gone with a friend of his who recently lost his wife to some place nearby which has a climate like Bombay. He is supposed to stay there." For a moment, but for a moment only, I wondered what this was about. And then

it struck me that obviously she was referring to some rumour about me and the Maulana. I am Ballo's *chote chacha* and Maulana is the friend. That was her way of getting over the censorship and it succeeded. But the rumour had no foundation—thus far.

And yet I feel vaguely that something is going to happen, not very soon but in the course of the next two or three months. There is no point in my being transferred or in Maulana's. That will not happen.

Another rumour: that Wavell has got an intense prejudice against Vallabhbhai whom he considers pro-Japanese. That may be true but it is absurd to consider Vallabhbhai as pro-Jap. He and most of us and most Indians are intensely anti-British and this feeling has grown during the past 16 months. Also it is difficult for him to think internationally. In that he represents our people far more than I do.

Even I, in spite of all my international outlook, have grown bitter against the British. I analyse myself and try to be objective. I think I can understand British reactions to much that has happened. They have been functioning under the peculiar stress of war and peril, and it is easy to get excited in these circumstances. Still, much has happened in recent months which has angered and embittered me. There is an utter lack of decency, almost malice, which has characterised the British attitude to India. Often I think of the future—Would I like to go to England again? No, for the first time I have developed a strong dislike to the very idea of my visiting England. I want to keep far away from it, unless compelled by circumstances to go there. The idea of appealing to the British people for anything irritates me—And above all I have got contempt for official leadership of the British Labour Party. Winston Churchill I consider an honourable enemy. He is implacable but he obviously has fine qualities apart from the question of India or the East. One knows where he is. But what is one to do with the humbugs of the British Labour Party?—weak, ineffective, pedestrian and singularly ignorant.

Stafford Cripps? A total failure—How badly he came out of last year's negotiations and after. I remember his saying at a public meeting in London in 1935 or 1936, where I was the principal speaker, that he was thoroughly ashamed of the part he had played in MacDonald's Labour Government in regard to Bengal & India.⁴⁰⁶ He apologised for it publicly. Will a time come when he will apologise again—for his later actions and behaviour?

406. Stafford Cripps had been Solicitor-General in MacDonald's government of 1929-31.

Yet he is, I believe, honest. He means well. But what is the good of meaning well if this leads to trouble and wrong doing? It hurts me to think how he has fallen in my estimation.

x x x x

The United States also do not attract me or call to me as they used to. I should like to go there. There is vitality and change there. Still, still, I want to go to no place as a suppliant. I suppose it is conceit.

Indeed my wander-lust has suffered a severe shock. I cannot go anywhere casually for my going itself has a certain significance, attracting notice. And until that notice is of the right kind — not personally but nationally — I do not want to go at all. It is better to stick to one's land and remain in India and function here.

Only China, and partly the Soviet Union, affect me differently. China especially — I shall not feel an unwanted stranger there. There will be friendship, and not only personal, and an understanding and appreciation of India — It is strange and significant how China has been consistently friendly towards India during these dark and troubled months and years — There is the personal element but it is basically something far deeper — It is this which gives me hope.

x x x x

There are friends, of course, many of them, in England & America and I often think gratefully of them. They may be ineffective in the larger sphere of policy and action. Yet they make a vast difference for they prevent that awful hardening of the heart and will which comes between nations. It is bad enough as it is; how much worse would it have been if there had been no such friends abroad!

x x x x

A few days ago I received three books from Edward Thompson. To insure their reaching me he had sent them through the Viceroy. One of these was his new book on *The Making of the Indian Princes*, and in his inscription to me in this book he has quoted a passage from Plato:

"And what ar'ye thinking of, Agathon?" asked Socrates
 "That this man called me friend," answered Agathon.

x x x x

I was touched by this, and felt afresh that I must struggle against that hardening of the heart, which creeps upon me.

It is the Bengal famine, I think, and the British attitude to it that has embittered me most, especially what Amery has been saying about it. I suppose a million people, at least, must have died in Bengal since August last from starvation and disease brought about by lack of food.⁴⁰⁷ The number grows, though Calcutta figures, to which publicity is given, are lesser. But this latter fact is largely due to the forcible removal of tens and scores of thousands of destitute persons from Calcutta to the *mofussil*. Two or three millions may die, but tens of millions will bear the marks of this starvation throughout their distorted and shortened lives.

Why are we such miserable weaklings as to put up with this — to die like sheep with hardly a protest? Have the people of Bengal lost all spirit & vitality, all that gives dignity to man? And what of the people in other provinces? Perhaps they are not so down and out, yet who knows?

x

x

x

x

Not a single generous, really friendly gesture has come from England in regard to this famine, or from America, private individuals and some labour groups excepted.⁴⁰⁸ Deliberately and continuously British authorities have played down the famine and even prevented any substantial contribution of money from England. Poor labour folk⁴⁰⁹ in England, and the Quakers, have helped—not the rich—

So also from that land of immense riches — America —

There is no shipping space available, or not enough, for the urgent necessities of the war must come first. Canada's offer to send grain

407. On 29 October 1943, it was announced that since 15 August 1943, 16,800 persons had died in Calcutta alone due to famine.

408. No food from America came to India and the US Administration sought to ensure that India received no benefit from U.N.R.R.A., in 1943 in whose pool it had put 1500,000,000 dollars. Only in April 1945 was a fund raising campaign launched by American Relief India Inc.

409. Besides coming forward with funds for Bengal famine relief, some labour groups in England demanded Amery's resignation. In early December 1943, the Transport and General Workers Union resolved that "the present state of affairs (the Bengal famine) constitutes the final condemnation of British rule in India, and is doing untold damage to the cause of the United Nations"

cannot be accepted because of the lack of shipping.⁴¹⁰ Of course the war must come first, though India perish. Of the thousands of British and American ships, even half a dozen cannot be spared to bring food to India.

The U.N.R.R.A. (or whatever the initials may be) is busy making mighty plans for the relief of war-worn countries after the war.⁴¹¹ But Indian famine does not come within its scope. To perish for us in India, through lack of food, is not so odd or unusual as to get excited about.

x

x

x

x

What hurts terribly is the basic assumption that Indian life is cheap, that India is cheap. There is no flame of anger and resentment that such things should happen—Not in England or America. Not even to any large extent in India—We grow used to it.

x

x

x

x

In this cold-blooded and callous world, there was only warm-hearted response from China⁴¹² and Ireland.⁴¹³ It is the poor and the unhappy who think of the misery of others. Not the rich.

December 18, 1943

Darling Indu,

I have your letter of the 8th December—No. 39—which you wrote on your return from Jaipur. This is my letter No. 41.

I was interested to learn of your impressions of Jaipur. Those impressions of old India would have been confirmed and emphasized if you had gone to Udaipur which is still, I believe, a relic of feudal times.

410. The British Government had rejected relief shipments of grain offered by the Canadian and Australian Governments on the ground of an alleged shortage of shipping space.

411. At the Conference of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration held at Atlantic City in early December 1943, relief for India's famine victims was ruled outside U.N.R.R.A.'s activities on the technical ground that India had not been invaded.

412. In December 1943, China set up an Indian famine relief committee, with Madame Chiang Kai-shek as honorary Chairman. Funds received by February 1944 from China totalled Rs. 1,22,500.

413. Ireland gifted £ 100,000, a substantial part of its normal budget, for famine relief in Bengal.

Rajputana has an old-world atmosphere which clings to it and surprises a new-comer from outside. In spite of its misery, poverty and backwardness, there is a charm of history and tradition, of chivalry and blind courage, and one's mind inevitably travels back to those tales of long ago of brave men and beautiful women who cared for honour and self-respect more than for life or anything else. There also you find the remains of old artistry and leisurely craftsmanship, alas dying now and almost dead. Havell, the English art critic, was an enthusiastic admirer of these craftsmen and master-builders and he tried his utmost to encourage them and revive their crafts. He cried himself hoarse in his attempts to have them employed for new buildings, for he hated the Anglo-Indian style of architecture which was rising in all our cities in all its ugliness.

How I regret that I did not explore these parts of India and many others when I had the chance and could do so unobserved and in peace. It fills me with rage that I should have spent so much of my time in places like Mussoorie and Naini Tal and Simla, when all this loveliness and charm were there to visit, to see and enjoy, and learn from. But that time went by, wasted as so much of our life is wasted in trivial things, and later it became impossible for me to have that experience in the right way. I went to some of those places but there was no peace for me then, no leisurely wandering. My mind was afire with other matters and I had become a personage who attracted attention and created a stir wherever he went. My visit became an event, upsetting many people and often raising new problems. No longer could I go wherever I chose for I had to consider the consequences of my going. No longer was I master of myself or my time; circumstances had enslaved me.

But though I could not go myself to many places, and even when I went, I rushed through, surrounded by crowds, my mind became more and more absorbed with this mystery of India in her manifold aspects. I tried to fathom this, to have glimpses behind the surface, to understand what this country of ours had been and was now. But the more I knew of it, the less I claimed to understand it. Once, I remember, as we were journeying from Kuala Lumpur to Penang in the comfortable saloon carriages of the Malayan railways, I sat down to write about India. The mark of India on the other countries that I had visited had impressed me and fired my imagination. I wrote a page or two and then there were interruptions and the mood passed. Somewhere still I have that page or two, and somewhere in my mind there is still this desire to put down on paper that groping of my being for an understanding of India.

I am glad you have managed to reach Walsh and have had an answer from him. Tell him not to bother about sending me a copy of *The Unity of India* if this is so difficult to obtain. When he issues a new edition or impression he can send me some copies. As a matter of fact he could easily dispose of a few hundred or even a few thousand copies in India, there is such a demand for it here. Tell him also that he has my authority to take any step in regard to the publication of my books which he thinks proper. It is not possible for him to consult me, so it is better to do without that consultation. I rely on his good sense to do the right thing.

You might also mention to Walsh that *Asia* magazine never seems to come this way. I miss that greatly.

Do not trouble to send me the Cawnpore hand-made paper. Keep it for your own use. If I want it I shall let you know.

What you write about Naresh, he deserves every encouragement in the mechanical and engineering line. He is still very young and should have a sound basis of formal education. But Patna is a rotten hole from the educational point of view. Even Allahabad would be better. Bombay probably would provide better facilities. Why do you not consult Pan about it?

About a year ago or more I asked Betty to get for me Otto's *Persian Conversation and Grammar* or any other Persian-English book for beginners. She could not find anything. It might be worthwhile for you to ask Rahman of Kitabistan if he can get me such a book. He deals in Persian books and might know. There are ever so many books of this kind—Hugo's *Persian Self-Taught* &c. Then there are manuals for military officers to learn Persian. Anything will do, but I do not want an old-style Urdu-Persian primer. I want to take advantage of being with Maulana to learn some little Persian. But do not trouble yourself over this by writing to various booksellers. If Kitabistan are not helpful, drop it.

The coming of the cold weather—such as it is—made me fish out some old clothes from my suitcase. I was amused to find that they had ceased to fit me, because I had grown somewhat thinner. It struck me that this would apply to all my clothes, including my European suits &c. A minor tragedy was also discovered. My *pashmina* pullover was full of holes—partly eaten up by insects or whatever they are. I use it of course still.

But I think it would be worthwhile to try to get a new one made. I liked the old one very much. It was especially made for me by the All India Spinners Association, Kashmir branch, Srinagar in 1940. Could you write to them and ask them to repeat their performance? I do

not like short pullover just up to the waist. I want them long, well covering the hips. It should be made of fairly-fine *pashmina*, brown or beige in colour. I have just measured myself, over a shirt: chest 35½ inches; waist 31 in., length (to cover the hips) 29 inches.

There is no chance of my getting this in time for this cold weather. Still I should like to have it made for future use.

I should also like to have a small, light wrap for the shoulders—not a shawl. They used to have a big *pashmina* muffler which served well for the purpose. I suppose it could be made easily; about 1½ yards in length with the usual *pashmina* width—white in colour. The stuff should be as light as possible—some of the white ring-shawl kind. You can write about this also to Srinagar where they may have it ready. Or enquire from the Allahabad Khadi Bhandar. Is the old Munshi Aijaz Husain still there?

I read in some paper that Vatsala was engaged to someone in the Air Service. Is she getting married soon? And what of the hospital then?

Your letter of Dec. 12th has just come. I am glad you have invited Mridu to Anand Bhawan. I hope she will come and stay there some time.

You are right—I have read H.G. Wells: *You can't Be Too Careful*. That was a mistake on my part. Remove the book from the list I sent.

I am glad *Pupha* is better. You mention Anand Sapru's illness. I did not know about this. What has happened to him?

How is Mohan *chacha* getting on? I should like to have news of him. He is one of the few persons for whose character I have a great admiration. He is quiet, wholly unassuming and non-interfering, and yet a fine worker. Give him my love. Also to Lado *chachi*.

The usual Urdu verses, the first by Zauq, the second by Atish.

اب تو گھبرا کے یہ کہتے ہیں کہ مر جائیں گے
مر کے بھی چین نہ پایا تو کدھر جائیں گے (ذوق)

In Hindi:

जोक: अब तो घबरा के यह कहते हैं के मर जाएंगे —
मर के भी चैन न पाया, तो किधर जाएंगे? 414
لکے منہ بھی چڑانے دیتے دیتے گالیاں صاحب
زباں بگڑی تو بگڑی تھی خبر لیجے دھن بگڑا (آتش)

414. Zauq: Vexed and pestered here, do we say:
'All will be well, when we pass away';
What if, even then, we find no peace!

आतिशः लगे मुंह भी चिढ़ाने, देते देते गालियां साहब—
जबां बिगड़ी तो बिगड़ी थी, खबर लीजे दहन बिगड़ा! ⁴¹⁵

Love to you and Feroze

Your loving
Papu

21.12.43

Darling Betty,

I have your letter of the 11th December. I am sorry to learn that Raja is not progressing as he should and that he has lost more weight. I do not presumably put much faith in the Ayurvedic or Unani systems of treatment, though undoubtedly they make good occasionally. Asthma is a troublesome and sticky ailment and requires a lot of looking after and individual attention. I hope that the change in weather will benefit Raja.

The year 1943 is slipping away to join its forbears in the dim recesses of memory and the dusty tomes of history. Outside, in the wider world, much has happened; but here in this little, narrow and confined world we live in, it has been the same from day to day, uneventful, unchanging, with the same routine and the same people to look at and talk to, or, more frequently, to be silent with. The weather and sky tell us of the changing season, the calendar tells us the date, but somehow all this has a touch of unreality, for there are no sensations of feelings which mark off one period from another. So the year goes with all its drabness and monotony, and yet another year creeps in, an unknown stranger, but carrying the heavy burden of the past and the present on its young shoulders. May it be well with you during this year that is coming and may you face all that it brings of good and ill with a stout heart and cheerful mind.

Love to you and Raja.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

415. Atish: First you called me names,
But now you make a face too;
Only a harsh tongue was it,
But there now, do you know,
You disfigure your face?

December 22, Wednesday.

Day of the winter solstice—or is it tomorrow? Anyway we complete 500 days here today and so I stuck up our flag high up in the dining room.

Five hundred days—Last time, in Gorakhpur and Dehra Dun I spent just 400 days—That makes 900 during this war period. How many more?

I have lost count of the total period spent by me in prison since I started this jail-going business. Nine times I have been to prison—this being the ninth—I think I have spent nearly 8 years in prison actually—including remissions &c. on previous occasions. This will mean nearly ten years. In terms of days I have thus spent nearly three thousand days in prison so far—

December 24, 1943

Darling Indu,

Your letter No. 41 dated 14 Dec. has also reached me. This is my 42nd letter. I am writing to you a day earlier than usual—on a Friday instead of a Saturday, for tomorrow is Christmas Day and the day after is Sunday. The post office will be closed for these two days and so it has been suggested to me that I might send off my letter today.

I have received a parcel from Jaipur, sent by Bappi or by you when you were there, containing *supari*, dried fruits and various kinds of sweets. Some of these sweets, especially the पेठे का मुरब्बा are obviously of the Agra variety. They are all good.

I sent you some days ago another packet of old periodicals.

You ask me about an Assamese translation of *Letters*. I am almost sure that I gave permission for this to somebody in Assam. If you can trace that register of mine in which all these facts are noted—a big book probably in the steel cupboard where my papers I kept—you will be able to find out the name and address. Giving permission, of course, does not mean that the translation has been published. Sometimes these translators and publishers take no further steps or delay publication inordinately. If you can get hold of the address, you might write and enquire. If the book has not come out so far and there is no chance of its publication, then I am absolved from my contract and can withdraw my previous permission and arrange with someone else.

I know plenty of people in Assam who could be referred to but I suppose most of them are in jail or detention and not approachable. As the person you refer to is connected with the Calcutta Univ. College of Science, a reference might be made to Prof. Meghnad Saha⁴¹⁶ of that college. Saha is a Bengali and cannot judge Assamese. But he might be able to say something about Nagendra Nath Neogi. In any event I can only deal with publishers, not translators. A translator might well do his work and then be unable to get the book published. I do not believe in private publication by individuals. So Neogi might be asked, provided the book has not already been published in Assamese or is not likely to be published soon, what publisher is going to undertake the job. Also if he could get some competent opinion about the translation.

As these *Letters* have become popular and are included in prescribed courses, I have been anxious that as far as possible there should be no exploitation of students. So in all my recent agreements relating to them I have put in a proviso that if a public educational authority, a university or the like, wants to use the book, they can have the copyright from me free. I have given this copyright free for Urdu and Hindi translations to the Education Department of the U.P. Government. In the Bengali I have given it to Santiniketan. The U.P. Education Dept. were thus able to bring out the *Letters* very cheaply, almost at cost price. Even so they made some profit out of them and I suggested to them that this money might be used for scholarships for poor students. This was agreed to. What has happened since I do not know.

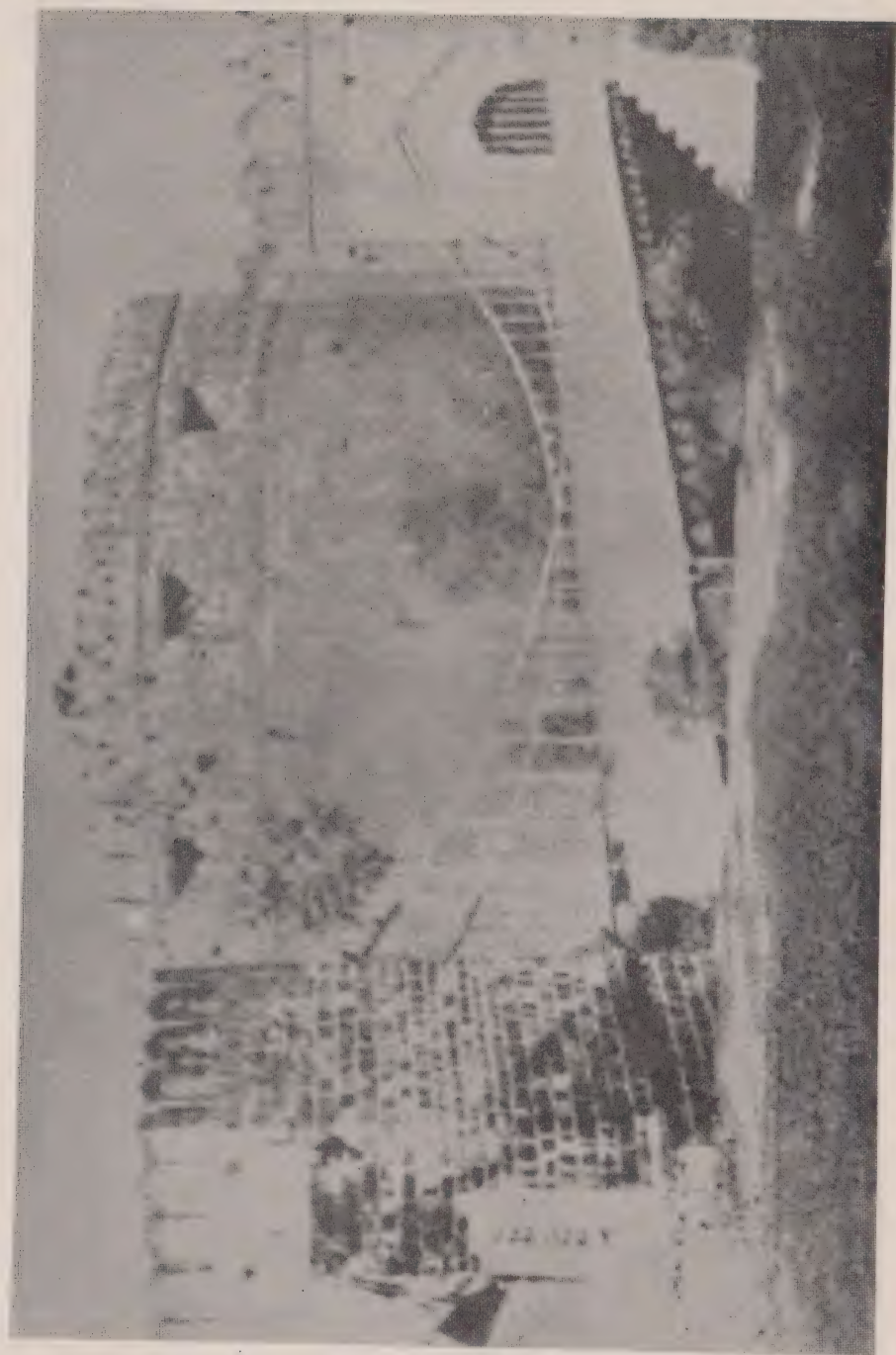
If you can get hold of the register, referred to above, it would be worthwhile to write to my other publishers in India—there are quite a number of them in various languages—and ask them how matters stand.

The Jamia Millia of Delhi brought out after long delay an Urdu translation of about 1/3rd of the *Glimpses*. This was a year or two ago. Have they proceeded with the work?

I see no reason why Vatsala should not continue her work in the hospital even after her marriage. Marriage should not come in the way of her work, if she remains in Allahabad and can give enough time to it. Is Chaudhri,⁴¹⁷ to whom she is engaged, a Bengalee? Give her my congratulations and good wishes.

416. (1893-1956); distinguished physicist; Fellow of the Royal Society; Professor of Physics, Allahabad University, 1923-38 and later at Calcutta University; Member of Lok Sabha, 1952-56.

417. Kumar Chaudhri (b. 1915); Commissioned Officer in Royal Air Force. 1940-45; Aerodrome Officer, Department of Civil Aviation, 1948-53.



AHMADNAGAR FORT

Trans. 36. p142

عادت - عادات

افسانہ fable

تواریخ historian

رسم - رسم

عجیب

حکایت کردن to relate ' در بارہ concerning

اہل - اہل تاریخی people ریگ sand

بی آبی - aridity

صحرا - بیابان desert

خشکی - dryness

ہولناک terrible

مورچہ ant

رواہ fox

سگ dog

کندن کا دیدن { dig to

حاندن to dwell

ریختن (ریز) to pour

بیردن out

چنان - پختن - such

عمومی ordinary

سائر (of) all the rest

If Braj Mohan Vyas⁴¹⁸ has gone to *The Leader*, he must have left the Allahabad Municipality. Was he pushed out or did he resign?

Puphi writes to me that Mehr Taj is coming to Allahabad for the Christmas holidays. If she is there when you get this letter, give her my love.

I am very glad to learn that *Pupha* is improving. But recovery will be a long process and he will have to take every care of himself.

Here are two couplets from Ghalib. How many Urdu couplets have you collected so far?

ہوس کو مے نشاط کار کیا کیا
(غالب) نہ ہو مرنا تو جینے کا مزا کیا
مئے عشرت کی خواہش ساقی گردوں سے کیا کیجیے
(غالب) لیے بیٹھا ہے اک دو چار جام واژ گوں وہ بھی

गालिब: हवस को है निशात-ए-कार क्या क्या—
न हो मरना तो जीने का मजा क्या ?
मए इशरत की ख्वाहिश सक्ती गर्दूँ से क्या कीजे—
लिए बैठा है इक दो चार जाम वाशगूं वह भी ।⁴¹⁹

निशात = joy; गर्दूँ = sky = आसमान; मए = wine; वाशगूं = उल्टा (that is empty); जाम = wine cup.

This letter will probably reach you on the eve of the New Year. Time flows on inexorably and the days and the months and the years pass by, or is it we that pass for it is we that bear the marks of this passing of time. A couple of days ago it struck me that we had been here just 500 days, each day, like its forerunner, with no highlights, no new sensation, an ant-like existence, except for the activity of the mind. How we get used to anything and adapt ourselves to circumstances. But not the rebel mind which probes and wanders and dreams, forgetful of its environment. The real tragedy is when the mind itself gets dull and routine-ridden, incapable of new effort, lustreless.

So the New Year comes to the sound of the clashing of swords and

418. Executive Officer, Allahabad Municipal Board, 1921-43; served the *Leader* press, 1943-48; died 1963.

419. Ghalib: Pleasure—much, too much,
Passion takes in things it does;
But life without the lurking death
Would it be of any worth?

From the heaven's *saqi*
Why wish wine of mirth and joy;
What else has it except the goblets seven?
And they too all empty, upside down!

the beating of war-drums and the bursting of bombs, and to the silence of jails and prison camps. The human spirit, irrepressible, leaps over all this and thinks of the joy and beauty to come—sometime.

May it be well with you, my darling one, during this year that is coming and the years that follow.

I have often written to you that you should arrange to give every possible help in Bengal relief work—financially to the extent of all my resources. I do not know what you have done, what moneys you have sent. Just now, when most people have got used to the Bengal tragedy and imagine that the worst is over, there will be even greater need of help. Get Rs. 1000/- from my account at Bachhraj's and use it for this purpose—more later when you want it. You need not mention my name.

Love

Your loving
Papu

December 28 Tuesday

Yesterday I received two covers from America, the kind which bring magazines like *Time*. I put them by as I was busy reading a book. Later I opened them and out of one emerged *One World*⁴²⁰ by Wendell Willkie. I was quite excited for we had long read about this book, and some extracts from it had been cabled across and had appeared in the newspapers. It was stated that a large consignment had been held up by the Bombay customs for months—In fact it was still there. The book was not available anywhere in India, though probably some copies addressed to individuals, what is more likely some copies through American agencies, had got through. So when I saw the book I was pleased and excited. Immediately I sat down to read it and my usual programme was completely upset.

It is a small book but a remarkably good one. On merits the book is good but its real value comes from the fact that a man like Willkie has written it. Considering his background, his training, his political career, it is astonishing that he should have arrived at the conclusions he did and, what is more, expressed them in vigorous language. It was a delight to read the book.

420. Wendell Willkie, the Republican nominee for the presidency in the 1940 election, after his defeat travelled on a 49-day tour of the world. He then wrote this book explaining the interdependence of all peoples.

It is odd that Franklin Roosevelt, the champion of freedom &c, should have gradually subsided and become more and more of a canny politician afraid of antagonizing vested interests or Winston Churchill and Wendell Willkie should stand forth as a full-blooded protagonist of world freedom, even at the risk of falling out with his party and thus ruining his chance—and a bright chance—of being elected President of the U.S.

From his picture, Willkie has a very agreeable and friendly face. Presumably what he has written is an understatement of what he feels. This applies especially to his references⁴²¹ to India which are pointed enough and yet guarded.

x x x x

Another small book that I have read recently is Pearl Buck's *Asia & Democracy*.⁴²² Well-written of course, clear & concise, earnest and full of a restrained emotion. Yet absolutely fair and always an attempt to see every side of a question. The book produced a powerful impression on me of a really civilized mind. How few of us in any country are civilized in this sense. Each convinced of his rightness refuses to consider the other viewpoint, and shouts and grows strident.

Willkie produced this impression of being really civilized on me also. I cannot conceive of any frontrank politician in England being so open, receptive and frank in his approach to difficult problems, and giving public expression to such views.

x x x x

Jinnah—what a drop from Pearl Buck and Wendell Willkie!—offers an obvious example of an utter lack of the civilized mind. With all his cleverness and ability, he produces an impression on me of utter ignorance and lack of understanding and even the capacity to understand

421. Wendell Willkie first mentions India in the book when he declares that it was President Roosevelt's "express desire that I should not go to India". Later he writes: "Many a man and woman I have talked with from Africa to Alaska asked me the question which has become almost a symbol all through Asia. What about India?" He then quotes what "the wisest man" in China said to him. "When the aspiration of India for freedom was put aside to some future date it was not Great Britain that suffered in public esteem in the Far East. It was the United States."

422. This is a collection of articles, speeches and letters to the editors in which Pearl Buck considered that the end of the war was not the end of war for many of the coloured peoples who still had to fight for freedom. The obstacles to their success were not the Axis powers only, but Britain and the United States.

this world and its problems. I suppose most of us lack that spirit or capacity to understand in greater or less degree, but Jinnah surely is unique.

His recent effort at the Karachi Muslim League session very poor, and yet just like him—bombast, general cursing, not a single thought.⁴²³ But an interview⁴²⁴ he gave to the United Press of America was more revealing still. In this he categorically stated that he wanted Gandhi and all of us to remain in jail. He failed to understand the repeated cries for our release—Evidently our release will, according to him, do him no good. His present position depends on the Congress being in prison.

What a tangle! Logic & reason and goodwill are of little use when dealing with persons who possess none of these attributes. Instinctively I think that it is better to have Pakistan or almost anything if only to keep Jinnah far away and not allow his muddled and arrogant head from interfering continually in India's progress.

x x x x

Mahmud has been giving us a bit of a scare again. He has not been well and seemed to be deteriorating and heading for some kind of a relapse. He is a little better now. Especially for him, Sendak brought the instrument for measuring blood pressure. Taking full advantage of it he took all our B.P.s.

During the last year or more my blood pressure has been:				
Sept.-Oct. 1942	118 systolic	—74 diastolic	=44	Pulse pressure
Jan. 29, 1943	120	„ —84	=36	„
Sept. 6, 1943	120	„ —85	=35	„
Dec. 26, 1943	125	„ —85	=40	„
June 26, 1944 ⁴²⁵	125	„ —83	=42	„

Dec. 31, 1943

Darling Indu,

I had intended writing to you tomorrow, Saturday, on New Year's Day. But again I am told that tomorrow is a holiday for the post office and

423 He termed the Congress attitude as "insensible and a call for civil war", and added that so long as the Congress claimed to represent the whole of India there would be no honourable settlement.

424 In this interview on 23 December 1943, Jinnah justified Mahatma Gandhi's detention. "He was arrested for his threat of a mass movement. Reason demands that he must withdraw that threat."

425 This entry was obviously made later.

it is suggested that I write today instead. So I am writing to you my last letter of 1943, instead of my first letter of 1944. This is my No. 43 which means that I have been writing with some regularity for 42 weeks. As a matter of fact the period is somewhat longer for I find that my letter No. 1 to you was written on the 5th March.

So 1943 goes into history and becomes a memory, a spot in the long record of things remembered and forgotten. Two days ago I saw the new moon and it struck me that it was our 18th new moon here; there was a new moon to greet us here the day we came, just as there was a new moon for me when I was landed in Gorakhpur jail three years ago or more—the moon of *Id* it was then—ईद का चाँद—and *Divali* had just gone by.

Sometimes I am fascinated by the idea of Time. We take it for granted as we do so many other things in life because we get used to them—the wonderful pageant of the stars, the sprouting of the seedlings bursting out from the womb of their mother earth in search of the sun, the flowering of the buds, and the soft rustling of the wind through the trees. Yet how amazing is this idea of Time! Is it Time that passes us, or rather is it we that pass and call our passing Time? As when we travel in a railway train and city and town and village appear in ordered sequence and pass us by, giving us the impression that they exist one after the other. Daily and hourly we change and each new aspect of ourselves is just a wee bit different from the last. So dead and past selves pile up behind us but the new self, itself a thing of the moment, ever changing, carries the impress of all these past selves upon it, past experiences and thoughts and trails, dreams and reveries, and the hard knocks of existence. Looking back, one sees this long and interminable succession of past selves, fading into each other, like ghosts of things that were and are no more.

So 1943 passes and we stand on the threshold of another year, peeping into its dark and unknown recesses, and wondering what it may contain of good and ill. And we also grow reminiscent and think of the past that is over, standing on the razor-like edge of the present, with vast expanses of the past and future on either side.

Do you know that our ancestors of long long ago had, unlike most people, a very powerful idea of Time? The ancient Greeks had no word for more than a myriad or ten thousand, the Romans stopped at the mille or thousand, and the Arabs also had no word beyond a thousand. But the old Indians had a definite notation, in a scale of ten, with names for numbers which went up to prodigious figures—over 50 zeros added

to 1. They thought of time in terms of millions and billions of years and at the same time their smallest unit of time was 1/17th of a second. But their most wonderful discovery, two thousand years ago, was that of zero. Every child knows this now but to evolve this zero idea for the first time must have been the work of a mighty genius. It has been called one of the great world discoveries of all time. On that is based all our modern arithmetic and algebra and so much else. शून्य (nothing) zero is called in Sanskrit and from that has come the Hindi सुन्ना.

Now zero is a very odd thing. If you divide anything by it, the result takes you to conceptions which are not easy to grasp—It is infinity. The old Sanskrit commentators, at a loss for a more homely comparison, compared this result to one of the attributes of God!

I have had no letter from you since I wrote to you last, but yesterday I had letters from *Puphi* and Betty. They gave me a budget of domestic and family news—a long succession of disease and illness and suffering. Raja is no better and his asthma and other troubles continue their grip; Ranjit, after some progress, has had a bad relapse; Anand Sapru⁴²⁵ has become partly paralysed; Maharaj Bhai⁴²⁶ is dead. That is a sad record and it distresses.

In my last letter I wrote to you again to arrange to give out of my account some financial help for Bengal relief. I suggested that you should get Rs. 1000/- (one thousand) from Bachhraj for the purpose. This to begin with. I have no idea how my account stands with them but I imagine you will be able to raise this much out of what is called the current account. I do not suppose relatively small sums like this make much difference, but they add up. Anyway I shall feel a little better if this is done. It is bad enough to learn of the suffering in Bengal, Orissa and elsewhere and not to be able to do anything worthwhile. Later, I should like to give some more money.

You can consult *Puphi* about the disposal of this money. Personally I would prefer it to go to the 'Save the Children Fund' started by the Women's Conference for that is a definite object which goes beyond just feeding the starving. The idea of concentrating more on the children appeals to me.

There appear to be any number of relief funds and I suppose they are all doing more or less good work. The Ramakrishna Mission people do this work remarkably well, both efficiently and in a selfless, unostentatious way, and I admire them greatly. But theirs is, as it should be, general humanitarian work, chiefly, I suppose, giving food

425. A.N. Sapru, youngest son of Tej Bahadur Sapru.

426. Maharaj Bahadur Takru, a cousin of Jawaharlal.

and medicine. They are rightly popular and, I imagine, they are getting enough money. So the 'Save the Children Fund' had better receive my contribution.

I hope this part of my letter is not objected to by the censor and blacked out. I see no reason for this, except possibly his desire that my name should not be given publicity. In this, if not in most other matters, I am in agreement with him. I do not want my name to be published in this connection. The donation should be anonymous.

Have you any news of Madan Bhai? I suppose he is still in jail.

Here are some Urdu verses:

- عمر تو ساری کٹی عشق بتاں میں مومن
(مومن) آخری وقت میں کیا خاک مسلمان ہوں گے
- मोमिन: 427 उम्र तो सारी कटी इश्क-ए-बुतां में मोमिन—
आखिर वक़्त में क्या खाक मुसलमां होंगे 428
- (असी) اذان دی کعبے میں ناقوس دیر میں پھونکا
کहाँ कहाں کہاں ترا عاشق تجھے پکار آیا
- आसी: 429 अजां दी काबे में, नाक़ूस देर में फूँका—
कहाँ कहाँ तेरा आशिक़ तुझे पुकार आया ! 430

बुत (plural बुतां) means an image, idol. In Urdu poetry it often refers to the beloved. (बुत was originally derived from बुद्ध as some of the earlier images were those of the Buddha.) अजां is the cry for prayer; देर = temple; नाक़ूस = शंख.

So on to the New Year and all good luck to you.

My love

Your loving
Papū

427. Momin Khan (1800-1851).

428. Momin: O Momin, all my life idols I adored;
How very funny, when the end is near,
If a Muslim now I be!

429. Abdul Bari Asi Ulduni (1893-1946).

430. Asi: In the Ka'ba to Thee alone, I called;
In the idol-temple, in Thy name alone,
I sounded the conch-shell high;
Here and there, everywhere,
This, Thy humble lover, O Lord,
Gave Thee an adoring call!

1944

New Year's Day, Saturday

Inevitably one grows reminiscent. Last night, as the old year was at its last gasp, I thought of the past, of our friends and relatives, of the war, of our own struggle for freedom. This morning again, when the stars were still out, I surveyed the scene and inquired how I felt about it all. It was a difficult question to answer, for my feelings are very mixed—I have stabilised them, I suppose, at a somewhat low level.

Two days ago I had letters from Nan & Betty containing a budget of family news. It was a dismal record of illness and suffering—

x x x x

This afternoon's paper contains the news of the death of Begam Alum, Maulana's sister, in Bhopal. It has been hard for the Maulana—His wife, now his sister.

4.1.44

Darling Bets,

I have your letter of 24th December. This is the first letter I am writing in 1944.

I am glad Raja is under Bharucha's treatment. The experiments with Ayurvedic and Unani methods do not impress me.

Yes, I read in the newspapers of my election to the P.E.N. vice-presidency. Tell Madame Wadia⁴³¹ that I appreciate and am pleased at the honour. My regret is that I cannot be of much use to the P.E.N.

I hardly know Madame Wadia. But I have met her on a few occasions and like her. I think she has done good work in carrying on with the P.E.N. organization in India.

I am waiting eagerly for your book. It may come any day now.

Love to Raja and you.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

431. Sophia Wadia (b. 1901); theosophist; founder-editor, *The Indian P.E.N.*; editor, *The Aryan Path*.

January 8, 1944

Darling Indu,

I have your letter No. 42 of the 27th Dec. Three days ago I received a brief note from *Puphi* to say that Ranjit's condition had worsened and was rather critical. I learnt also that Pratap and his wife had gone from Bombay to Lucknow. I have been greatly worried and anxious about Ranjit. An item of news in the papers stated that he was a little better and had at last been able to spend a restful night. Also that you and Feroze had gone to Lucknow to see him. I do hope the crisis is past. But, in the best of circumstances, it will take a long time for him to get well. His last illness in the dismal and wholly inappropriate surroundings of prison has evidently knocked him up a lot.

Ranjit's ill-health has always surprised me. He is careless when he is actually unwell, but otherwise his manner of living has been so healthy, full of fresh air, exercise, riding, swimming, shikar in the jungles, that it is odd that he should break down. Of course, much of this he has had to give up for many years, and repeated visits to prison have gradually weakened him. Still, it does surprise me how people who live unhealthy lives often manage to carry on better than those who pay attention to the normal rules of health. Probably, physical health has much more to do with the mind than is generally recognized. Mental strain and conflict act immediately on the body. That is the reason, I suppose, why many of our friends, during these years of storm and trouble, have suffered bodily illnesses. It is easier to look after the body than the mind.

I have received a brief letter from Amma from Benares dated 24th December, in which she complains of not having had any letter from me for a long time. A previous letter of hers, dated November 24, said the same thing. Now, I wrote to her to her Benares address on Nov. 16th, and I do not understand why this letter should not have reached her even by Dec. 24. Hindi letters take much longer to pass the censor, but a month and 8 days is surely ample allowance. Will you write to her and tell her that I have received these two letters of hers and that I have also written to her. I am glad there is a chance of Kailash and Sheila coming back soon.

The various things you or Bappi sent me from Jaipur reached me, as I have already told you. This included a bagful of *supari*. I took to keeping a *supari* in my mouth, as I used to, but then, I had reason to remember a warning which my dentist had given me some years ago.

Suddenly one day the *supari* did damage to a filling in one of my teeth—So I am off *supari*.

Your mention of Sheikh Saheb's visit to Allahabad has reminded me of Dwarka Nath Kachru. Where is he and what has happened to his wife? When I was leaving Allahabad on the last occasion I tried to persuade her to go back to Kashmir, but she would not agree. For all her shyness, she is an obstinate little woman and it is not easy to make her change her mind.

I am returning to you another lot of old foreign periodicals—*Life*, *Amerasia*, *New Statesman*.

Here are more verses from Ghalib:

تھک تھک کرے ہر مقام پہ دو چار رہ گئے
تیرا ہتہ نہ ہائیں تو ناچار کیا کریں ؟
(غالب)
دونوں جہان دے کرے وہ سمجھے یہ خوش رہا
ہاں آ پڑی یہ شرم کہ تکرار کیا کریں

غالب:

थक थक के हर मुकाम पे दो चार रह गए
तेरा पता न पाएं तो नाचार क्या करें ?
दोनों जहां दे के वह समझे यह खुश रहा
यां आ पड़ी यह शर्म के तकरार क्या करें⁴³²

Love to you and Feroze

Your loving
Papu

This letter is my No. 44.

January 10—Monday—

The 18th month has begun, not in very agreeable circumstances—Five days ago I had a brief letter from Nan from Lucknow. Ranjit's condition had become suddenly rather critical with congestion of the lungs combined with continuous attacks of cardiac asthma. He could

432. Ghalib: At every stage the weary stopped and withdrew;
In their search for Thee helpless did they feel;
When they could not find Thy place
What else could they do?
Both the worlds to me He deigned
And thought that I was pleased;
But I my modesty kept and it said to me:
"Nay, why reiterate the demand for more!"

neither talk, nor eat, nor walk, nor sleep, nor indeed lie down— He sat in bed and struggled painfully for breath all the time. Pratap & his wife had been sent for from Bombay—

I have had no further letter since then, but a news item in the papers said that after two or three critical days Ranjit had a peaceful night. Indu & Feroze, it was stated, had gone to Lucknow. Possibly Betty might have gone also.

x

x

x

x

There has been a film of anxiety in my mind during these past days, chiefly because of Ranjit, but partly also because of other people's illnesses—Here Mahmud has been in trouble, though he is now emerging from it—Raja does not seem to get better—Nan cannot get back to her usual health & has relapses—And I, in spite of my boasts, am obviously feebler. We are all an aging lot, physically on the decline, and it is this thought that troubles me— Not that I am frightened in any way of age, but I do want to achieve more constructively in India before I join the weak and the aged—

When I look at my bare body, its look of fitness surprises and pleases me. From the neck downwards, it looks a young, tough body, but it is topped by a neck and head showing age. But even this look of youth in the body is deceptive and the insides have not kept up to the mark. A slight extra twist causes pain and I am beginning to be a little careful of hopping & jumping about as I used to. For two days now I have had an annoying cold— That is nothing much but what is worse is a backache accompanying it. If I cough I get a shooting pain— This kind of thing surely is Age!

x

x

x

x

At the back of my mind the idea had hovered that I should begin writing work at the beginning of 1944—January has come and is well on its way but I am still reluctant to do so. Mental laziness I suppose— Now I tell myself that as soon as I have finished reading a number of new & old books I have got, I shall think of writing. This process never ends. At present I am reading chiefly the Bible (Old Testament) and the *Upanishads*. I have read through more than two-thirds of the Old Testament and am getting a bit tired of it.

January 12, Wednesday

Today brought a sheaf of letters for me—2 from Indu, one from Betty and one from Nan from Lucknow. One of Indu's was also from Lucknow where she and Feroze had gone to see Ranjit.

All these letters are full of details about Ranjit's condition. The latest is dated 6th January from Betty from Bombay but Nan's dated 5th gives more definite news. I have been feeling low since I got all this distressing news. Because I had had no news for a number of days I had, optimistically, concluded that Ranjit must be making progress. But it now appears that the progress, if any, is not appreciable. All that can be said is that he just managed to get over the crisis of Dec. 30th to Jan. 1st. Otherwise his very serious condition continues—How Ranjit must suffer with this combination of pleurisy, asthma and possibly heart trouble! An ominous New Year's Day.

Pratap & Saraswatibai are there in Lucknow—Betty was on the point of going when a 'phone message from Lucknow asked her to postpone her departure for a while—This is a good sign for she was told that some slight progress was being maintained—Also the absence of news in the papers is good.

January 14, Friday

Ranjit is dead. He died at 5 a.m. (5.40) this morning in Lucknow. Five hours later this news was conveyed to me. It had come by telephone from the Bombay Govt. who had been informed by Betty.

It was inevitable after the account I had received in Nan's letter that came two days ago—Oxygen being administered four-hourly..... And yet I sought comfort in an odd phrase here and there. How could death come to him so early?

I was haunted by a line in Nan's letter: Ranjit's struggle for breath reminded her of father's last days. Still I twisted this and tried to make it mean something different. How we delude ourselves.

I feel desolate and very lonely. The texture of life seems to be loosening and coming out in shreds. There is no richness or fullness left in it.

January 18, 1944

Darling Indu,

I did not write to you last week. Instead, I wrote to *Puphi*. On Friday, January 14, I was informed that *Pupha* had died that morning in Lucknow.

During the last week I have received more letters than usual—two from *Puphi*, three from you. All of them mention some slight progress in *Pupha's* condition, give hope of recovery. Some of them have come after the news of his death.

Your last letter, dated January 12, came yesterday. You tell me in it of Ballo's approaching marriage and of two other weddings. It was odd to read of marriages when my mind was full of death. Yet, I realised that this was the way of life, and life and death, and sorrow and happiness are strangely mixed together. The world goes on along its appointed course, and even wars with all their vast horror and destruction do not reflect it overmuch. They are incidents covered over by the next season's harvest, as the harvest in Bengal will cover up famine and death, and a new generation will grow up and labour and suffer, and marry and beget children, and then fade away. But the memory remains, the memory that imprints itself on the mind of man and moulds his being, or which lingers in the consciousness of a people and a race and often determines their future actions.

I feel lonely as my friends and colleagues pass off into the unknown, and a feeling of weariness steals over me, a realization that I too belong to a passing generation. The old and the aging have a way of monopolising the stage, forgetting nature's way.

Puphi must be worn out after the long strain and the shock. She will require some peace and quiet and rest. Perhaps she could have more of these if she moved to Anand Bhawan. That is for her to decide.

Deaths in the family break the routine of existence and upset not only our minds but our ways of living. Gradually we adjust ourselves to the new scheme. There has been little of routine in all our lives, no settling down, and we have long been travellers in an unknown country, not knowing where our next temporary halt might be. So for us the process of adjustment is perhaps less difficult than for those who live more normal lives. Yet the effort has to be made to make the transition easier, to tone down the rough edges as much as possible.

You were right in placing the house at Bijju *chachi's* disposal for Ballo's marriage. Everything that is there is for her to use as she wishes.

I have received the cardigan that you have sent me. But you need not and should not have sent your own. I do not require any warm things. My old pullover, full of holes as it is, and a warm waistcoat are more than enough for the mild climate we have here. Even when the new *pashmina* pullover is made it should not be sent to me here, lest the moths and the insects get at it. Soon *Vasanta Panchami* will be with us and then a fairly quick change of season. It is pleasant of course to wear your cardigan, because it is yours. I am using it. As the season changes I shall return it to you. I do not want to offer it as a feast for various worms & insects.

Do not bother about the *Persian Grammar* or indeed any other book. The one (*Persian Grammar*) in Anand Bhawan is no good for me. I have masses of books here, old and new, and they can keep me occupied for many months.

Some days ago I sent you a number of books. In this lot there were two books of *Puphi's*—Han Suyin's *Destination Chungking* and Andre Maurois' *Call No Man Happy*.⁴³³ Both of these I had previously received and read. Return these books to *Puphi*. Among the other books returned were: Havell's *Ideals of Indian Art* & Pearl Buck's *The Mother*.⁴³⁴

I shall send you another batch of books in a day or two. This will also contain a book of *Puphi's* (*Campion's Towards the Mountains*).⁴³⁵

I have received from you Morgan's *Sparkenbroke and Life & Letters*⁴³⁶ for July 1943.

Do not trouble yourself about Jahalo's letter. And do not send me Khalil Gibran's book if it reaches you. I have already read it.

I might be somewhat irregular in my letters to you for a week or two—I intend writing to Chand and Tara at the next opportunity.

In one of your letters you mention that you are losing weight and otherwise not feeling well—This distresses me—You should keep well—
Love

Your loving
Papu

433. An autobiography in which Andre Maurois writes of his life as a writer and a man of public affairs.

434. A novel relating the sufferings of a Chinese peasant woman.

435. An autobiography.

436. A literary journal edited by Robert Herring.

January 25, 1944

Darling Indu,

I have had a letter from Betty from Anand Bhawan telling me of various people who have come to Allahabad and giving me other news. Amma has also sent me a telegram of condolence which has been forwarded to me in the usual way by the Bombay Govt. Last week I wrote to Chand and Tara to Wellesley.

All these happenings must have been a great strain on you, even more so a mental strain than a physical one—You wrote to me that even before all this you had not been feeling too well. I think you should take yourself in hand and get over this indisposition. This is the best time of the year in Allahabad and you should take full advantage of it to put by a reserve of good health. You know well what to do. One thing, however, I should like to emphasize again, as I have done previously. This is breathing exercises. I am a great believer in them and I think they are more important than other forms of physical exercise. In your case, particularly, they should do good. I am not referring to any fancy ways of breathing but just regulated deep breathing daily, or better still twice a day.

For some odd reason I did not feel too well either early in January and developed a slight backache. It was nothing much but it put me off exercise and spinning. Later the news about Ranjit depressed me greatly and, as is usual in such cases, made me feel physically low—I have got over these aches &c now and am gradually reverting to my exercises.

I had hoped to send a bundle of my yarn in December last—By that time it should have been enough for a sari. But I have been very irregular in my spinning and often there are gaps of a week or more—For nearly a month now I have not spun at all. So progress has been slow. It depends a great deal on the mood I am in and the quality of the slivers. As the slivers were none too good my spinning time & production were proportionately reduced. I shall go back to it now—Tomorrow is an auspicious day and so I shall start afresh then.

I wrote to you last week not to send me any more books—Well, I have changed my mind—That shows how inconstant and changeable I have become! Mahmud wants one of my books and you should be able to find this in my room—It is Thompson & Garraff's *Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India*. It is a fairly heavy volume. As you are likely to send this, you might add another, if you can find it. This is a trans-

lation of the *Ten Principal Upanishads* by A.E.⁴³⁷ and some Swami whose name I forget. This book was sent to me when I was in Dehra by Bharati out of the Ambalal Library and I have failed to return it. It should be in my dressing room. As I have read some of the translations of the *Upanishads*, I want to compare A.E.'s version with them. The book is published by Faber.

Recently I have read in the newspapers an account of a memorandum⁴³⁸ on the industrial &c. development of India issued by Tata House and signed by Jehangir Tata, Purshottamdas Thakurdas, Birla, Dalal &c. I should like to have this booklet, or whatever it is, together with connected papers, if any. Will you ask Betty to write to people in Bombay and have it sent to me?

Bebie must be with you—Give her my love—I hope she is keeping well.

This letter is rather a thin one—which, I suppose, indicates that my mind just at present is not as bright and overflowing as it should be—Perhaps too much reading with its attendant thinking is not conducive to a proper equilibrium. External activity is also necessary. As a matter of fact I have not even paid attention to our little garden lately and it is in a poor way, though this is just the time for it to flourish. Our efforts at vegetable growing have not been conspicuously successful. I think our soil is not good enough for them and then, in our eagerness for results, we have watered them too much. I realise now, as I had not done previously, that there is always a tendency to overwater our plants.

I have just seen a new book on gardening which seems to be helpful. This is E.W. Grindal's *Everyday Gardening in India*—published by D.B. Taraporevala Sons & Co. of Bombay. You might get it for your own use.

Give my love to Betty, Raja and Feroze—

Love

Your loving
Papu

I have taken to a variation of a sea bath here! I remembered that when I was a little boy I used to see *Dadu* rub his body with rocksalt when bathing. So I got a chunk of rocksalt and began using it this way. I liked it. It produced a slight tingling sensation. I think it should be good for one. Try it. But be careful

437. A slip for W.B. Yeats.

438. A *Plan for the Economic Development of India*; this plan envisaged an investment of Rs. 10,000 crores in industrial development for trebling the *per capita* income which, with allowances for population increase, would result in a 100 per cent rise in the standard of living in 15 years.

also. Sometimes it breaks and a sawlike edge comes out which cuts through the skin. This happened with me and in one vigorous movement I managed to get a number of scratches all over.

This is my letter No. 46.

P

February 1st 1944

Indu darling,

Two of your letters, dated Jan. 19 and 23, came to me together soon after I had sent you my last letter. They were full of the burden of sorrow and an emotional upheaval at the suddenness of death and all the questionings that this experience gives rise to. Out of this eternal questioning has arisen philosophy with all its problems, and throughout the ages innumerable people have wondered over this mystery of life and death. Philosophy has come to you early because not only of personal shock but also the larger tragedies that surround us. It depends on each one of us how we face these questions, how we react to them. Adequate answers we may not have but our imaginative self gives some kind of an unconscious response which affects our individual lives. We weaken under the stress and lose our sense of poise and equilibrium, or grow stronger and more capable of riding the storm and yet being not too much affected by it. Life is amazingly dynamic and while it lasts, has an extraordinary capacity to adapt itself and to express itself forcibly. We see this daily in the exuberance of nature and we are parts of that nature and have, or should have, the same exuberance and vitality. So we carry on along our appointed course and, though limited by circumstance, still endeavour to mould that circumstance itself according to the urge that is within us.

Reason and argument go some way to shape our minds and direct our activities. Yet in the final analysis we act because of that inner urge within us, which has been formed and conditioned by so many factors which have gone to our making—our own experiences chiefly, piling up one on top of the other from birth and childhood onwards, the influence of others, our heredity and our racial and cultural inheritance, our education, the sensations we have known and experienced.

So our reactions to events vary. Some, and among them have been wise men, think all this business of life a thing of sound and fury signifying nothing. Others have discovered or felt a meaning in it all. Yet

others, uncertain whether there is any meaning or not, still are compelled by some force within them to adopt objectives and codes of behaviour and follow them with all their might. Perhaps that itself signifies some deep intuitive faith in a meaning. However that may be, most of us affirm life and it is right that we should do so positively, rather than just carry on negatively.

Twenty-five hundred years ago the Buddha addressing his followers said: ".....while ye, O disciples, experienced this sorrow through long ages, more tears have flowed from you and have been shed by you, while ye strayed and wandered on this pilgrimage of life, and sorrowed and wept, because that was your portion which ye abhorred, and that which ye loved was not your portion, than all the waters which are in the four great oceans."

A sad thought and though a true one, yet perhaps with an overemphasis on the pain and suffering of life. Buddha was frequently emphasizing this and many people therefore call Buddhism a religion of pessimism. Yet the face of Buddha in the statues that his faithful followers have made with loving care, and even more so in the image of him that I have in my mind, is so devoid of pain and sorrow, so full of peace and calm and compassion, that I cannot connect it with suffering. Or does it represent the conquest over sorrow? I do not think of him as a man of sorrows.

And then going to the lands where Buddhism still flourishes, we do not find the people pessimistic at all. Where could there be more of the joy and affirmation of life than in the Chinese people? Is that a racial characteristic, I wonder, which has overcome and transmuted the pessimistic tendencies of the faith, or is it something else? I do not know. But I do know that I am seldom depressed for long by events, however painful they might be for the moment, and a certain unreasoning faith in life rises up in me and keeps me going. I cannot argue about it but it fills me and therefore life is an affirmation to me and not a negation. Even if that subconscious faith were absent, I suppose, I would continue to function in much the same way, but that urge helps and gives me vitality. Experiencing this myself, I want others to share it with me.

What a letter I am writing! A vague and possibly unmeaning attempt at philosophy in its relation to life, or perhaps just a glimpse of that restless and wandering creature, my mind. I have written as I have done because I want you to have such glimpses and to realize as I do the extraordinary fascination of life's adventure. That pilgrimage would be no adventure if it lay in the ruts of normal experience and cautious conduct, safety-first in everything, like the slow-moving river on an almost

level plain. The body has its adventures and experiences, and many are worth having, but the real adventures are of the mind. Indeed all feelings and experiences are ultimately of the mind, and the mind itself is part of the body.

There is the adventure of the individual, the adventure of the race, and finally the world adventure—and all tend to get mixed up together—and we can be parties to all these adventures. If the individual's adventure has an ending, the others continue and carry us to an endless future. Our country, tragic as she may appear to us at the present moment, has been carrying on her story and her quest since the dawn of history many thousands of years ago. That quest will surely continue and merge itself in the conditions of the modern world, into the world-quest for life and freedom and adventures of the mind and spirit.

I am sending you some periodicals and three books. One is Douglas Reed's play: *Downfall*—and two⁴³⁹ are by Krishnamurti. They contain some good pictures and some that are not good, as you will no doubt notice.

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 47.

5.2.44

Darling Betty,

I am writing to you after a full month. My last letter was sent to you, I think, on January 4th. Since then your letter from Bombay has reached me, and your subsequent letter dated January 19th from Allahabad. Other letters have also come to me, from Nan and Indu, giving me particulars of Ranjit's last days.

It is three weeks now since he died and during this period my mind has been trying to adjust itself to the fact that he is no more. That is not easily done, and yet sometimes I feel that ages have passed since he died. But adjustment has inevitably to be made. Living in isolation,

439. They are, *Jawaharlal Nehru: The Man and his Ideas* and *Betrayal of Freedom*. The former deals with Jawaharlal's life and views on national and international problems and the latter with the meaning of freedom in the light of his ideas.

and not having seen him for a year and a half, the whole conception becomes of the mind and imagination.

Every death upsets the equilibrium not only of various individuals but of the group or groups of family and friends. There is a gap. That gap remains and yet nature establishes a new equilibrium.

For over a month now I have been expecting your book. At first I thought that its publication might have been delayed but then I saw references to it in the newspapers. So it is obviously out. Probably your sudden departure for Allahabad upset your plans, and prevented you from sending it to me. I am anxious to have it—So send it soon.

The days are lengthening as the seasons change and we make minor alterations in our routine in order to fit in with these changes. But in the main the routine continues—There is little to change. The mind lives in its own world, unlike the body, free and untrammelled, and this world of the mind becomes more real to us than the daily routine of petty activity.

With love to you and Raja,

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

February 8. Tuesday—

I have calmed down and resumed the even tenor of my life. How amazing is one's capacity to adapt oneself to changing circumstances and even to events that shake one up! Yet I suppose they leave their permanent imprint in the mind and, to some extent, even on the face.

Indu was greatly upset. It was the second death that she saw. She was present also at father's death but perhaps she was too young then to feel the shock. I do not know and perhaps she did for she was thirteen then. I was not in a proper state then to observe her closely. Shock in its intensity came at Lausanne to her when Kamala died eight years ago—eight years!

And now she suddenly heard on the telephone that Ranjit had died and a few hours later his dead body was brought and she met it at Phaphamow. Ceremonies, cremation & etc—Sudden disappearance of a person one was used to and the attendant circumstances compelled her to think of the ultimate problem of life & death. Her letter to me was full of it. Then she saw my letter to Nan and this moved her. I

have not heard from her for two weeks now and am a little anxious about her health. From various accounts this is none too good.

X X X X

After death—marriages. In mid-February Ballo is getting married in Allahabad and there are a number of other Kashmiri weddings.

X X X X

January 26th—Independence Day—We observed it by meeting together in the afternoon and silently repeating the pledge, as we did last year—

X X X X

Sarojini, after a long silence, came out with a number of statements. One on Independence Day, a good one which must have heartened many people—Then a press interview or rather conference in Delhi where also she did well.⁴⁴⁰ She made a few minor mistakes in her facts about past occurrences, but as a whole her account was a good one—

Too good evidently for the Government. A spate of gagging orders descended on her and on some newspapers. Astonishing conduct and most revealing of the present Govt. How they dread the truth, and how fearful they must be of something happening in India which might upset them—

These very comprehensive gagging orders have served one good purpose. They have set at rest the hopes of the ever-hopeful that Wavell was going to make some far-reaching announcement⁴⁴¹ in the Assembly which is meeting from today in New Delhi.

X X X X

440. Sarojini Naidu, released in December 1943 on grounds of health, on 25 and 28 January 1944, made political speeches which resulted in a Government order forbidding her from making public speeches. She had said that Mahatma Gandhi was never pro-Japanese and that neither he nor the Congress had ever encouraged violence. The order was withdrawn on 16 October 1944.

441. On 17 February 1944, the Viceroy said that the Cripps offer was still open and expressed Government's willingness to release the Congress leaders on an assurance that the August Resolution would be abandoned and whole-hearted cooperation in the prosecution of war extended. He called upon every Congressman to "withdraw individually" from the August Resolution "by using his own conscience".

A curious message reached us in a roundabout way the other day. It was in a letter in Marathi which had come normally through the censor. The writer had seen somebody who again had seen somebody else (Kanu)⁴⁴² who had visited Ba recently as she was ill. There possibly Kanu had a few words with Pyarelal or Bapu—All this is very very indirect and the links in the chain very weak. The letter naturally contained indirect references—Well, the purport of the message was that Bapu was satisfied with things as they were and considered our (Congress) position as strong. बाजी हमारे हाथ में है.⁴⁴³ Of course there were ups & downs as there must be in a revolutionary movement. But essentially we were in a strong position. Further that he was not prepared to condemn anybody for what had happened. He seemed to be anxious to know how all of us here (the W.C. members) were getting on.

All this may be exaggerated or varied in transmission and yet it may have a germ of truth in it—Even apart from any particular statement or view, it does indicate a state of mind—a certain basic optimism.

x x x x

Six months ago, about the time when we were approaching the end of our first year of internment, many of us thought that Bapu might begin another fast. There had been some hints in the press also. Nothing happened.

Now again, just a year after his last fast, the same idea has been hovering in our minds, though we did not think it at all likely—Yet there was just a shadow of a chance and so this second week of February had a certain importance attached to it. It seems clear now that he will not fast or do anything else that is dramatic.

x x x x

So today we complete eighteen months here! Another two months or so and I shall have exceeded my longest term of imprisonment, which was twenty months, twice. I am likely, & so are the others here of course, to exceed it by a good long time.

What is the effect of jail life on an individual? For the person who is ill in any way, ill in body or mind, it has undoubtedly a bad effect & he deteriorates. In cases of chronic & extreme ill-health it may be hell—Even for a normal person it has a deteriorating effect.

442. Kanu Narandas Gandhi (b. 1917); great grand nephew of Mahatma Gandhi; jailed 1932-34; worked on Mahatma Gandhi's personal staff, 1934-48.

443. We are in an advantageous position.

But given good health and a certain calmness & poise of the mind, a capacity to adapt oneself even to jail conditions, the effect may not be bad, except that, in any event, it must deaden a person's sensibility. He must grow progressively duller—more animal-like, less human.

In a bodily sense, the rate of growing older should slow down for there is less wear & tear of the body and less in the way of bodily sensations. The mind also experiences fewer sensations and lives chiefly on the imaginative plane. Still the mind ages more than the body and traces of this become visible on the face.

So, given bodily health & mental health (two big provisos) a longish term in prison (but not too long) should not age the body. To a certain extent time should stand still so far as the body is concerned. Of course there are other factors which continue functioning, and the mind affects the body. But on the whole the body is preserved and the period in jail might not be counted as affecting the allotted span of years. Relatively the body ages less than the mind, and the body apart from the form keeps younger than the face.

What is the allotted span of life? I suppose every person born has a certain vital energy attached to it and derived chiefly from heredity and partly from other causes. In subsequent years the environment and various experiences, mode of life &c may add to this vital energy or subtract—At the same time the process of life itself is gradually draining this energy. The complete exhaustion of this energy means death in old age, though that age may not be much in years. An accident may bring death even before that exhaustion.

If that is so, a period in jail, under suitable conditions of health, should mean a preservation of that vital energy and hence in lengthening life—

But what of the mind? It may well become dull, almost lifeless, though bodily life continues. A long term in prison will certainly have that effect. For an ordinary criminal in prison, with society and the world against him, this process of dulling and embittering the mind will naturally be more marked than in the case of a political prisoner. An ordinary criminal who is also an intellectual will suffer most of all and is likely to break down or become just an automaton during a long term.

A political prisoner might escape these consequences, provided the treatment he has to put up with is not too bad, and he has the necessary mental equipment to live with a calm mind in isolation. But it is a tough job.

After repeated experiences of jail life, one gets accustomed to it to some extent. Wholly accustomed one can never get. It is far too abnormal.

How differently people react to it! I can hardly think of two persons among the thousands I know well who have gone to prison as politicals, who have reacted in the same way. A few go to pieces completely. A few do quite well. The vast majority lie between these two extremes.

It is all wrong to think of political prisoners as if they were treated like a few of us. Nearly all of them have a very hard & harsh time, worse in many ways than even the ordinary C class convict.

Two or three days ago I read of lathi-charges in Berhampur jail in Orissa on Independence Day. Forty-four persons injured, many severely, according to the official statement. Why? Because they had put up the National Flag on that day in their barrack and refused to pull it down before evening. Among those injured was Bishwanath Das, the ex-Premier of Orissa—What a brave man he is! Whatever other qualities he may lack, he does not lack courage.

The idea of lathi-charging prisoners inside jail when they are not attacking anybody and are peaceful is disgusting.

x x x x

I think what has affected me most during the past 18 months is the positive indecency of the Central & Provincial Govts. towards Congress prisoners. I can understand occasional shooting, killing &c. But the deliberate mean treatment that has been given is so malicious that I can hardly conceive any decent person permitting it.

x x x x

Some days ago I thought suddenly of reading Radhakrishnan's *Indian Philosophy*.⁴⁴⁴ I intended reading the introduction and glancing through the other chapters. But having begun it I grew rather fascinated at this adventure of ideas and now I am entangled in it.

Another and very different book that I am reading at present is Tod's⁴⁴⁵ *Annals of Rajasthan*. Reading the stories of Mewar & Chitor I feel quite thrilled.

x x x x

444. S. Radhakrishnan: *Indian Philosophy*, 2 vols. (1923 and 1926).

445. Col. James Tod, many years Resident at Udaipur; his *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* is a collection of tradition, legends, genealogies, and literature.

I had thought of beginning some writing work in January. But always there are some books which I want to read first and this list does not get exhausted! As I calculate now, I have at least three months' hard reading still. Probably at the end of April I shall want another month or two. Roughly I have got a plan of reading & writing in my head which should take me to the end of July. But it is quite likely that when I start writing, the process will continue for many months as it did previously.

If by any chance I get discharged soon, there will be a shade of regret at unfinished tasks. But there is no chance of that and so I need not worry!

x

x

x

x

So I complete 18 months here. Because of this rather artificial landmark, I have been tying up loose ends in my work during the last two days. I have given a thorough cleaning to my room, aired my clothes and books and done many other odd things which had been passed over.

And because of this I have sat down today to write in this journal after a long interval—

February 8, 1944

Darling Indu,

It is two weeks now since I had your last letter. I await news of you and from you and want to be assured that you have got over the shock of recent events and are keeping well.

In one of your recent letters you told me about Ballo's approaching wedding. When I first read of this I mistook the date to be 17th January and this seemed rather inopportune. Then I discovered that it was Feb. 17. I suppose this wedding and others will be taking place about the time you get this letter. You will give my love and good wishes to Ballo and his bride and suitable presents which are available. Also give my love to Bijju *hachi*.

Last time I saw Ballo was, I think, in my flat in St. James Street in the summer of 1938. He spent a couple of days with us there. He was big and manly looking then. I suppose he has grown bigger since. What has he been doing here since his return?

I understand that it is possible to get yarn woven here locally into cloth. Some of my companions, who are expert spinners and who produce much more than I can ever hope to, have had their stuff woven

into various pieces of khadi. So it has struck me that I might well follow their example instead of sending you my yarn and then for you to send it on to Psyche and for her to find out weavers. I shall try to get a sari made when I have enough yarn for it. What is the usual length and width of khadi saris which you wear? Previously I believe saris used to be six yards long but since the advent of khadi, with its additional weight &c., this has been reduced to five yards. Let me have the exact measurements. Also send me, if you can, any of my old yarn which you can find. I wrote to you once about it and asked you to send it to Psyche. But Psyche did not want it just then and so perhaps you have not sent it. If it is still with you in Anand Bhawan, then send it; otherwise not. It used to be kept in the left hand drawer of my dressing table.

Betty sent me some time ago Tod's *Annals of Rajasthan*—3 volumes. I was a little surprised to get them but then she reminded me that I had myself asked for them. I remembered. I had thought of the book over a year ago in connection with your birthday. At that time it was not available. You were in Naini then. So the book was meant for you and it will be sent to you later. Meanwhile, I have been dipping into it and reading large chunks of it. Many of the stories I know, having read them or heard them in my childhood. Perhaps even now you will find an old edition of Tod in the library. Going back to them after this long interval, I found a new fascination in them and for some days my mind has been filled with these tales of Rajput chivalry and courage which mocked at death. In most countries you will find similar stories of bygone days, and yet it will be hard to beat these tales of Mewar and Rajasthan. We, living in a more sophisticated age, grow cynical and reckless courage and audacity, which cared not at all for the consequences, seem a little foolish and belonging to the childhood of the race. Yet there is something about sheer heroism and bodily courage which holds one and thrills. Pride and honour and keeping the plighted word were the Rajput virtues, and though something else of importance must be added to them, they are still very much worthwhile and will remain so. The Rajput has not often been noted for wisdom or intelligence, much less for discretion, yet wisdom without spirit and intelligence without daring are poor, weak companions, symbols of age and not of youth both in the individual and the nation. *Si jeunesse savait, si vieillesse pouvait*.⁴⁴⁶ And the Rajputs managed to preserve through a couple of thousand years or more magnificent bodily types before whom the average person of today in the East or the West seems puny and

446. If youth knew, if old age could.

undistinguished. Tod is full of stories of Rajput women coming out in moments of peril and with sword and lance leading their troops into action. Also of course of that terrible thing—the *Johar*.⁴⁴⁷

So I have partly lived in the enchantment of the Middle Ages of India during the past few days, and after I have done with these books, I shall send them on to you so that you may also sense that enchantment and experience that thrill. As history Tod is not very accurate and he has the most fantastic ideas about words and their etymologies. But he has the great gift of a sympathetic imagination and so he builds up a picture which is truer in essence than a bald, dry history might be.

A few days ago I wrote to Betty (to Anand Bhawan) and asked her to arrange to send me a copy of the recent plan for the economic development of India issued by Tata House. I have received this now and so she need not trouble herself about it.

Today, or, to be perfectly accurate, early tomorrow morning, we complete 18 months since our arrest. How well I remember that morning when I bade you goodbye and I was driven away as the dawn was breaking. You were standing by the car and the last glimpse of you I had was when the car took a turn and passed on into the unknown.

Eighteen months! Yet twice before I have exceeded this period and spent over 20 months in prison, which was equivalent to a two-year sentence. Altogether, I suppose,—I have lost exact count—I have spent about 8 years in prison. I have developed a theory about this prison-going business, and though it is 'a general theory, there are so many ifs' and but's' and provisos attached to it that for the moment it applies to a relatively small number of persons. That number includes me. The theory is this: If a person keeps good bodily health, and if his mind can keep calm and in equilibrium, and if the minimum requirements of the body and mind are met, then the period in jail does not age one in the normal way. Bodily age comes from wear and tear of the body and a succession of sensations. Both these are reduced to a minimum in prison life. There is the mind, of course, and this affects the body, and it is more difficult to control. If it is not agitated and can keep more or less poised, its aging process might be reduced also, though not so much as that of the body. The mind in prison lives a life of the imagination far more than that of sensations. It will depend on the quality of that imagination as to what effect it has on the aging process. Generally speaking, and subject to the provisos, the period in jail will not age the body much. Almost, you might say, that it does not count

447. When faced with defeat or capture of their city, the Rajput women immolated themselves while the men in saffron robes rushed out to be killed.

in the allotted span of a person's life—allotted in the sense of the amount of vital energy the person possesses which carries him through a number of years and then fades out with life. The face, however, being far more a mirror of the mind, shows age more. So there is a discordance first of all between the body as a whole and the mind, and then between the body and the face. Anyway in spite of these discordances, life is apparently prolonged.

But only so if there is no illness of body or mind. There can be nothing worse than any such illness in prison. So you can ponder over this theory of mine and derive such satisfaction from it as you can!

For some weeks I have not sent you any Urdu verses. Here are two couplets:

مرگ اک ماندگی کا وقفہ ہے
(میر) یعنی آگے بڑھیں گے دم لے کر
رہرو تشنہ لب نہ گھبرانا
(حالی) اب لیا چشمہ بقا تو نے !

मीर: मर्ग एक मांदगी का वक्रफा है
यानी आगे बढ़ेंगे दम लेकर⁴⁴⁸
हाली: रहरो तशना लब न घबराना
अब लिया चश्मा बक्का तू ने !⁴⁴⁹

मर्ग=मौत; मांदगी=थकना; वक्रफा=ठैराव; रहरो=a fellow traveller; तशना=प्यासा; बक्का=जिन्दगी

This is my letter No. 48.

Love

Your loving
Papu

448. Mir: Death is an interlude;
As though, having rested a while,
Onward we shall go!

449. Hali: O traveller,
Your lips are parched with thirst, I know;
But do not worry about it so;
Anon, anon, the Spring of Immortality
You shall reach!

February 15. 1944

Indu darling,

What a long time it seems since I heard from you. Three weeks. Perhaps not so long after all. But I had got rather used to getting a letter from you every week, and this makes me expect it, and when it does not come there is a sense of emptiness as of something missing. Indeed during these three weeks I have hardly had any letter, except for a brief note from Betty which she sent from Bombay.

This absence of news has troubled me somewhat for the last bit of information about your health was none too good. And so a cloud of anxiety has filled my mind. It should not be so for I can do nothing from here to help you in any way. Yet it is so.

Betty writes that you were not feeling well and that she had asked you to go to Bombay. Whether you are going there or not I do not know. If you feel unwell it is desirable to have yourself overhauled by the doctors and this cannot be done efficiently in Allahabad. Calcutta or Bombay are indicated and you can take your choice of them. In Calcutta you have Bidhan Roy, a doctor full of experience and good sense; in Bombay also there are good doctors whom you know.

It is quite cool still and in Allahabad it must be colder. But the change in the weather is creeping in and two months later it will be warm enough and the sun will begin to function for us in all its strength, and fans will be whirling over us. What will you do then? You should not stay in the plains during the summer months. Choose some place which appeals to you and go there. The hill stations of the Himalayas will probably not suit you for you will have to take a house or a cottage, or go to a hotel, and this will involve trouble. Nor is the atmosphere or the company there particularly soothing or desirable. There is Khali which is climatically, and in some other ways, very attractive to me. There will be no trouble fixing yourself there whether you go by yourself or with *Puphi*. Then there are the Bombay hills where you spent some weeks last year. They seem to me a kind of half-way house between the hills and the plains—good enough and yet not very exhilarating. Kashmir also need not be ruled out although it is far and a little difficult to reach. For my part I would go to Kashmir whenever I have the chance to do so. It is worth the journey.

There is no particular reason why you should confine yourself to one particular place for the summer. Thus you could go to Khali for a while and then to Kashmir. In this matter you should follow your

own inclination for, even more than the body, it is the mind that requires food in these mountain resorts. You are to some extent used to being alone, yet it is better not to be alone too much—Feroze, I hope, will be able to accompany you for a while at least. Perhaps he cannot remain with you all the time but he can visit you from time to time. If you can find another suitable companion, that would be desirable. To be alone, especially in the mountains, has its undoubted advantages for a while, if one can tune the mind to this kind of existence. But man, and woman, is after all a social animal and too much solitary living is not good. Cut off from normal contacts we develop in a lopsided manner and though we may gain depth and inner experience thereby, we miss much that life has to offer—We must not turn our backs to life and pay too much stress on the negative aspects of our existence. The positive side is important—Some kind of a balance has to be struck between them, an equilibrium between the outer and the inner life, so that, when need arises, we can adjust ourselves to either or to a combination of the two. The shaping of our lives is not entirely in our power and circumstances, entirely outside our control, influence us greatly. Yet we can do much and control, if not the circumstances, at least our reactions to them.

I have had a long enough experience of isolation and, though used to it, can never get over its abnormality. I wonder, often, how lopsided I must have grown. I cannot judge for no one can be subject and object at the same time. Sometimes I feel that this long-continued abnormal existence has made normality itself somewhat abnormal for me. And so always, wherever I might be, I am likely to be a round peg in a square hole.

But I have drifted to the not very important consideration of what I am or am becoming. What is more important is what you are or should become. I feel that you should not deny yourself company if you can help it. Unsuitable company is of course worse than none. But you have many friends and should be able to gather them occasionally around you—That will be good for you and good for them. We must not allow circumstances to corner us in our lives.

Mridu would probably be a good companion for you in the hills. She seems to have had a succession of operations and must require a restful existence for some time. Even apart from Mridu, there will be many others who will no doubt occur to you—I have a feeling that you live in your ivory castle a little bit more than is necessary or desirable. All of us must occasionally retire into that inner sanctum of our minds for peace and quiet reflection, and thereby gain strength and poise, and that calmness of spirit which is unaffected by the storms of

the outside world. Yet too much of that ivory castle disables us and lessens that very capacity to face unruffled the ways of the world.

Do not limit your activities and movements with the desire to economise. Economy is good in its way and waste is always bad. But I am no believer in economy becoming a controlling factor in our lives. We must take from life what we can whenever we have the chance to do so, and not hoard for future occasions which may or may not come. Money has to be spent, in a proper way of course, so do not hesitate to draw upon my account at Bachhraj's.

Betty has sent me her little book and I have read it with great interest—It is well-written and there are many moving passages in it. She has obviously taken great pains over it and yet there is a certain spontaneity and simplicity about it which draws me. The canvas is a very limited one—just the family circle—and a film of sentiment covers it. Personally I avoid sentiment, perhaps because I am also just a wee bit sentimental, but it was right that Betty should write as she felt. I wonder how an outsider reading the book feels. I am too much an interested party to be a proper judge. Perhaps the book may strike one as too much of a eulogy of the Nehrus who have nearly all the virtues and hardly any failings. But the average reader in India will put up with much of this kind for he has taken kindly to the Nehrus, and when he feels that way towards anyone, he is not overcritical and will accept all praise.

Some time ago I thought of diverting my reading to French and to ask you to send me a packet of French books from our library. (There are no recent books but a fair number which I got in the late thirties—Romain Rolland, Paul Morand⁴⁵⁰—*Journal d'un homme de quarante ans*⁴⁵¹ &c, &c.) Then I decided to postpone this diversion till I had finished a number of rather heavy books that I was reading—I now find that this process of reading goes on and on and there is no finishing it! I have been entangled in a heavy tome on Indian philosophy—also Plato—and the Bible! Do not imagine that I am taking to religion in the ordinary sense of the word. I was interested in the Bible because though I had read large chunks of it in the past I had never read it as a whole, and I like its language—Indian philosophy is, I fear, a little beyond me, at any rate its finer shades are beyond me as I am not metaphysical in my thinking—But nevertheless I found it rather fascinating reading. Adventures of the mind and the thought have always a certain fascination, and in our case in India

450. (b. 1884); French diplomat and writer.

451. Diary of a 40-year-old man.

there is an abundance of them. To some extent they help me to understand that very complex and mysterious entity called India.

Do not forget to send me the measurements for a sari—length & width.

Here is a couplet from Zauq:

کلمائے رنگ رنگ سے ہے زینت چمن
(ذوق) اے ذوق، اس جہاں میں ہے زیب اختلاف سے

जीक़: गुल हाए रंग रंग से है ज़ीनत-ए-चमन ।

ऐ जीक़, इस जहान में है ज़ेब इख़तेलाफ़ से ॥⁴⁵²

ज़ीनत=ज़ेब=ख़ुशनुमाई, खूबसूरती को उभारना; चमन=garden; इख़तेलाफ़=difference, variety, opposition.

This is my letter No. 49.

Love

Your loving
Papu

Feb. 18. Friday

For three and a half weeks—24 days—I have had no letter from Indu. Her last letter, written soon after Ranjit's death, reached me on the 25th January. She was agitated and troubled. Previously there had been hints of her not keeping well. And now a brief note from Betty confirms her lack of health, though it does not say much more. So for these many days I have been troubled and a cloud of anxiety has floated about my mind. Poor little girl! She is not physically strong & well and mentally she cannot adjust herself to the dead-ends and frustrations which life seems to offer at present to most people in India. Who can adjust himself fully to this? Very very few I imagine, some perhaps a little more than others. With her extreme sensitiveness and introspective attitude, she must find it particularly difficult. Perhaps when the time comes and I am with her again, I might be able to help her. But when will that be? Perhaps such problems have to be solved through personal experience and suffering only.

x

x

x

x

452. For the translation of this passage see *ante*, fn. 399.

Betty's new book has come and I read it eagerly. I liked it. It is not the kind of book I would have written as it is a little too sentimental. But it is a true mirror of her own mind & feelings and that, after all, is as it should be. Anything else would have been artificial and therefore lacking sincerity. The canvas is a small one & practically limited to the family, and there is not much depth of thought, of inner struggles &c. It would have been difficult to tackle these subjects, and then she is not political in the normal sense of the word. The book is well-written and certain passages are moving. I was quite affected by parts of the book and my mind travelled back to past days & half-forgotten memories were revived. There is a spontaneity about this book which is good.

X

X

X

X

One of the most cheering & promising signs of the times in India recently has been the 15-Year Economic Plan issued by Jehangir Tata, Purushottam Das Thakurdas, Birla &c—Unfortunately K.T. Shah has not taken kindly to it.⁴⁵³ It is extraordinary how K.T., with all his great ability, lacks good sense and judgment of what is appropriate & when—He is too academic.

For my part I have welcomed this plan and think that it is admirable, in so far as it goes. More will follow—Also that it was particularly needed at present. What has pleased me immensely is a speech of Jehangir Tata's in explanation of this plan.⁴⁵⁴ This shows an approach & a grasp of the wider situation which is surprising and remarkable in a man circumstanced as he is. I feel happy to think that Jehangir is growing in mind so well and can rid himself of the limitations of his group & class.

To some extent this applies to his co-signatories of the plan also. It is evident that recent political happenings & the Bengal famine have shaken all these people up and made them face realities—more so probably than our 100% politicians.

X

X

X

X

453. On 21 January 1944, K. T. Shah referred to the plan as favouring vested interests, disagreed with the suggested *per capita* increase and feared inflation as a result.

454. In a conference on 19 January, and in a speech on 15 February 1944, J.R.D. Tata defined the plan as a long-term development scheme to increase the national income from Rs. 2,300 crores to Rs. 6,000 crores a year and to improve industry, agriculture, communication, education, health and housing conditions mainly for the benefit of the underprivileged.

Some weeks ago there was a small item in the papers: One Sachindra Chandra Kar Gupta, convicted & sentenced to 14 years' R.I. in the Machhuabazar Bomb Case,⁴⁵⁵ was released from Dacca Central Jail after completing his term of imprisonment. He was, however, immediately re-arrested at the jail gate under D.I.R. 129!

After 14 years of prison—pre-war years and then the war years—the time gradually drew nearer when he had to be released as his sentence had been completed. How he must have counted the months, the weeks, the days and finally the hours & even the minutes, as all prisoners approaching the time of their discharge do. How he must have made plans—going home, seeing friends and the streets and traffic and normal life—He must have been in a fever of excitement—and then re-arrested at the jail gate and back again!

What refinement of cruelty, what mental torture was this! This case, and similar ones, have stuck to my mind and troubled me greatly.

18.2.44

Darling Betty,

Two weeks ago I wrote to you and rather foolishly sent that letter (via the Bombay Secretariat of course) to Allahabad. It must have travelled a lot, needlessly, but I hope it has reached you at last.

A week ago I received your letter of the 3rd February from Bombay, and a day or two later came the long-expected book of yours. I read this eagerly once through and then I reverted to many passages. I shall read parts of it many times but for the moment I had to part with it as others wanted to read it. It is not easy for me to give you an objective review of it for I am partial to you and, even more so, the incidents you relate are so intimately bound up with our lives that I can hardly view them apart, as from a distance. Still, I shall try to give you my opinion as objectively as I can in these circumstances.

I like the book. It is very easy reading and it holds one. That in itself is proof of the merit of the writing. It is difficult when writing of one's self not to be a little stilted and artificial. You have avoided that and there is a certain natural flow and spontaneity about it which appeals to the reader. The standard of writing is good, and many passages are moving and very well written. Where there is a lapse from

455. After a police raid on a house in Machhuabazaar street, Calcutta, on 18 December 1929, some members of the Anushilan Party including Sachindranath Kar Gupta of Barisal were arrested.

these heights, that in itself is not unwelcome as it indicates sincerity and an effort to express yourself rather than to hide yourself behind smooth phrases. It is a family chronicle in the main, and even that chronicle is dealt with in a series of sketches rather than as a connected whole. Nor do you go deeply into the conflicts of the spirit which often form an essential part of biography and autobiography. But to have gone into these would have been outside the scope of the book, and would have involved you in all manner of difficulties. You did well to choose this particular form and texture.

I think you have reason to be satisfied with the book and to be proud of it. There is a tinge of sadness throughout the book, as of an adverse fate pursuing us. That is a true reflection of your mind and perhaps of many minds, and indeed is the natural consequence of the unrolling of events as we look at their background. Occasionally, as in the title of the book, there is a challenge to that fate, and that is right, for if the chronicle has any meaning it is this: that we were continually challenging fate, defying it if you will, and accepting, without murmur, what it had to say in reply. The initiative was ours, not fate's, and though foreknowledge of events is not given to us, there was no lack of apprehension of results and consequences. And so, though life may have been hard and bitter occasionally, it could seldom surprise us or stun us. How far we succeeded in this attitude, it is impossible for one involved in it to judge or say. Others, and perhaps others of a different day, will be in a better position to judge. But even this attempt has value: it gives a certain dignity and poise to life's adventure, and those deeper experiences of the spirit which pass us by in our normal routine. If we miss something that makes life full, we gain something else of perhaps greater significance in the long run, and so the balance is not tipped against us.

Your book is so vivid occasionally that it evoked many images in my mind and the past stood up before me, and a vague nostalgia seized me. What effect it is likely to have on others, more or less strangers to us, I do not know. It is true that large numbers of people do us the honour of taking interest in us and so they will be interested in your narrative. Also to some extent that narrative becomes symbolic of others.

There are a number of minor factual errors in the book. They are unimportant and make no difference. You refer to our first meeting in 1912. As a matter of fact this was not the first time I saw you, though you could not possibly remember. In the late summer of 1908 I came to India during my Cambridge long vacation and spent about 2½ months here, chiefly in Naini Tal, where the family was at the time. I saw you then for the first time—you were less than a year old. I remember

distinctly giving you your first experience of horse-riding by making you sit in front of me on the lovely Shetland ponies we used to have there.

Next I saw you in the autumn of 1912 on my return from England. My first glimpse of you then was not at Lynndale (the house the family was occupying in Mussoorie) but just at the place near the Library where the bridle-paths from Rajpur emerge. There you were waiting for me, seated inside a ring saddle on the beautiful white pony which died later from snake bite. Lovely but mischievous he was. By your side stood our old bearded coachman. That was where you and I met and after spending a few minutes with you, I cantered off to Lynndale where mother was waiting for me. The rest of the family had met me at Rajpur and they were following me.

Mahmud had received your book also and he asks me to send you a message. He read it eagerly the moment he got it, and read it with the appreciation and enthusiasm of one long connected with the persons mentioned. He tried to read it critically also and liked it very much and there are passages in it which he cannot forget. He predicts that you will soon become a good artist of words if you continue to write. You depict tragedies better than comedies and that, according to him, is a true sign of an artist. He finished the book at night with a heavy heart and tearful eyes. He adds that your book is a characteristic outpouring of an Indian woman's selfless love to those who are dear and near to her. He wants to be remembered to Raja and Chinni and expresses his gratitude again for the magnifying glass. He sends his love to Harsha and Ajit.

Love,

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

February 22, 1944

Darling Indu,

Another week has gone by without any letter from or news of you. It is just four weeks today from the day when your last letter came. A long interval for me who waits, and I feel a little neglected. Yet I can well understand the many reasons which may have come in the way of your writing—activities, preoccupations, people coming and going, and, above all, the absence of the mood out of which a proper letter grows.

That negative absence of mood has often afflicted me when I am outside, and I have found it difficult then to put pen to paper, except for what might be considered formal or routine work. It is as well not to write till the mind is more in tune and the urge to write reappears, for any attempt to force the pace is likely to result in form without content, a letter just missing that vividness of the touch and personality of the writer, those glimpses and that vitality which words and phrases have the power to convey.

What strange and mysterious things are words! The spoken word is powerful enough but even more so is the written word, for it has more of permanence. Image of thoughts and impulses, of the treasures of memory and stored fancies, the prelude and foundation of action, an idol with clear outlines or shapeless, and yet full of the breath of life! As with so many things to which we grow accustomed—the stars in the heavens, and flowers and green grass, and mountains, and the gentle rippling flow of water, murmuring as it goes—and growing accustomed to them, our senses are dulled to their astonishing beauty, so also with words. But when, in the morning of the world, words and language first burst upon the mind of man, how great must have been the joy of this discovery, with what reverence he must have looked upon this mighty thing, coming to him out of the unknown! Inevitably, he praised the gods he worshipped and called this new power of expression the language of the gods. Carefully he treasured it in his memory and handed it on from generation to generation, and out of that arose the books he called sacred, the scriptures of various lands and religions.

Sacred they were, as every word of power is sacred, as every attempt of man to understand the mystery of life and of his own nature, as the unfolding of his mind and intelligence, as his ceaseless challenge and struggle against the powers and principalities that would ignore him and suppress him. But words have become too common coin today, debased and often counterfeit, fit emblems of many of the human beings who use them.

If I knew that you were well, sound of body and calm of mind, I would not worry, even though your letters delay in coming, or, as was the case a year ago, cannot come at all. But that film of anxiety which covers my mind feeds on lack of news, and I wonder what may have happened to you. Perhaps it is just nothing at all that is significant, perhaps the fault lies partly at least with the censor.

In my last letter I suggested to you that with the coming of the summer months you should think of a visit to the mountains. Apart from the question of your going away from the heat of the plains, I like the idea of your going to new scenes and pleasant places which would refresh

your mind and tone up your body, which depends so much on the mind. There was a selfish aspect to this also, for, through you, I can almost feel that I am travelling and breathing the invigorating air of the mountains, and meeting new people, and experiencing new sensations. That is something more than a vicarious enjoyment of the changing scene through someone else. I felt that way with Mummy and I feel that way with you.

Latterly I have been developing a mood for some kind of creative writing work. There is an urge to put away books and to write oneself, and there also is a hesitation in beginning. Between the two there is a tussle and, almost as a neutral, I stand by and watch. I do not know how things will shape themselves in my mind and which feeling will have the mastery. I allow the mood to develop and, as it develops, ideas, words and phrases, sometimes shape themselves in my mind, and then sink into the unconscious store of the mind. Perhaps one day the urge will be strong enough to impel me to give written shape to those thoughts.

That reminds me. I should like to have a good fountain pen if that is available in these hard times. The necessity is not an urgent one for I can carry on with what I have. My pens, if they really suit me, become almost part of me and last me a long time. The present one I am using—a Schaeffer—has been with me for 12 or 13 years I think. It is still giving good service, but there is something not quite right about it and I cannot have it repaired or attended to here. Johnson gave me a new Parker two years ago but I am totally unable to use it because the nib is too broad. Fountain pens must be difficult to get now and, normally, I would not get one without fully trying it. A pen suits or does not suit; there seems to be no half-way house.

I want you to keep in mind this matter and if, and when, you go to a place like Bombay or Calcutta to inquire about available fountain pens. Better still, tell Feroze to note it, for he understands pens. It is no good sending me a second-rate affair—I have such already. The kind of nib I use is, I believe, called medium-fine. That is far too vague a description but I cannot better it. I do not want it too hard or too soft.

Both Schaeffer & Parker have brought out a new type of fountain pen with the nib hardly visible, except for the point. This is well spoken of though I have never tried it. I doubt if either of these new types is available in India. Anyway ask Feroze just to remember this matter. There is no hurry about it whatever. And, if necessary, I can carry on with what I have.

I hope to send you within a few days a book on Indian birds by Salim Ali.⁴⁵⁶ This has a large number of fairly good coloured pictures. Unfortunately he does not give the names of the birds in Hindustani. I met him two and a half years ago when he showed me the first edition of his book (the present one, which I shall send you, is the 2nd edition) and I pressed him to give the local names. But he has persisted in his error. It is difficult, of course, to give these names as they vary from place to place. Still the book is a useful and helpful one.

A certain firm of publishers in Poona brought out some years ago a Marathi translation of my *Autobiography*— They have been engaged for some time in getting my *Glimpses of World History* translated into Marathi. They will probably write to you about it. You might, for safety's sake, look up my big memorandum book in which I have noted down particulars about my publications. (I wrote to you about this. It was kept in the iron cupboard which contains my papers.) Make sure that no previous permission has been given to anyone for a Marathi translation of the *Glimpses*. I am myself almost sure of this. You can then inform the publishers that they can go ahead with the work on the same conditions as applied to the Marathi edition of the *Autobiography*. If you cannot find the memorandum book, even so you can give permission. But tell them that the publication of the book should not be delayed and ask them in what form—number of volumes &c—they are going to bring it out. They can use Horrabin's maps, but possibly, later, they may have to pay some small royalty for this to Horrabin. This won't be much and it will be a lump sum. The name and address of these publishers:

Raghunath Ganesh Joshi
Sulabha Rashtriya Granthmala
12 Tilak Road—Poona 2.

Here is a couplet from an anonymous author :

وہ زمانہ کیا ہوا جب مری آم میں اثر تھا
یہی چشم خون فشان تھی، یہی دل، یہی جگر تھا

ला इल्म : वह ज़माना क्या हुआ जब मेरी आह में असर था
यही चश्म-ए-खूं फिशां थी, यही दिल, यही जिगर था⁴⁵⁷
चश्म खूं फिशां = खून बहाने वाली आंख

456. (b. 1896); specialist in field study of Indian birds and author of five books on birds.

457. The bleeding eyes of mine
And this very heart and soul I had;
But alas, where are the days gone by
When effective prov'd my sigh!

This is my letter No. 50.
Love

Your loving
Papu

February 25. Friday

It is just a month today—31 days—since I had my last letter from Indu. Daily, morning and evening, I wait for a letter, but the mail comes and there is no letter for me. Nan also has not written for nearly a month. I have only had a brief note from Betty and that a fortnight ago from Bombay. I am troubled and my mind is full of forebodings. I have continued to write weekly to Indu.

x x x x

So Ba has gone! Three days ago she died in detention in the Aga Khan's bungalow in Poona. She died at a good old age, in the fullness of time. And yet the world is poorer & emptier for her passing away. The old world we knew seems to be slipping away. For over 60 years Bapu and she lived together. What must he feel now?

February 27. Sunday

A letter from Indu at last; and though she tells me of the bad time she has had for a month or more, when she seemed to be on the verge of breaking down completely, I feel relieved. Partly because there is some explanation for her physical & mental upsets. She is pregnant.

At a time when every nerve & emotion were taut to breaking point, she writes, came strains & shocks—and Ranjit's death and his dead body being brought to Allahabad—and she felt a terrible blackness and nothingness stole over her. When she should have rested she could not do so and had to carry on till utter exhaustion came to her. And she felt (quoting Eugene O'Neil):⁴⁵⁸

458. (1888-1953); American playwright.

And day is night and night
 Is day again, and I have had no pleasure
 In sun or stars, for all things were to me
 As nothing.....

She is getting over this slowly but the tiredness remains, only it is a healthier weariness demanding sleep & rest.

I am glad she is going to have a baby, though this must involve a great strain on her and the risks are obvious. But she can never be happy unless she is a mother. She loves children and I think she has rather fretted at the possibility of her not having any because of the danger to her health. Last year she wrote to me that she almost thought of adopting a baby she met in Naini Prison —

The risk has to be taken with all possible precautions, and it may be that this natural function may strengthen her and do good to her general health.

February 29, 1944

Leap Year's Day

Indu darling,

At last your letter has come and the coming of it has been a relief to me, for there are few greater burdens than the blackness of silence and absence of news, which may contain in its dark folds all manner of strange things. The news that it contained was disturbing and soothing, an odd mixture of the two, and yet, in the balance, I felt soothed and comforted. How you must have suffered in mind and body during these weeks when an utter weariness and listlessness seized hold of you and life's rhythm seemed to be interrupted. To some extent that is understandable in the circumstances, for a while at least. And yet I wish you were not quite so sensitive, so vibrant to external and internal stimuli, for this sensitiveness strains the nerves and makes us feel taut and rigid. It drains energy and makes us feel more exhausted than even action at its highest.

Some people are not sensitive at all; thick-skinned and dull of mind and imagination, they go through life at a low level, accepting what comes to them without much comment or inquiry, and adapting themselves to changing circumstances. Thus they avoid the depths, but thus also they miss the heights. Who would change places with them, even if that means an avoidance of the pain and sorrow which seem to be so inseparably connected with life's journey? And yet I suppose there

is a middle way: to be in tune with life, to be sensitive and receptive to what it offers in a thousand ways, to sense its sorrow and its ecstasy, and not to be overwhelmed with either. Thus, perhaps, we may attain a measure of equilibrium, and out of sorrow itself extract peace and calmness of spirit. And so may achieve a certain victory over ourselves and over circumstances, whose creatures we otherwise are.


I am glad that you battled against the cloud that enveloped you and fought your way to light and air. There can be no submission to these mists and vapours of the mind, which rise up in all of us from time to time whenever they find an opening. For submission to them is a denial and a suppression of the real spirit within us, and without that we become like empty shells.

Your pregnancy explains to some extent these changes and feelings in you, for it is a vital time in woman's life, and this mysterious creation of a new life affects her mind and body in innumerable ways. Because of this I do not worry myself much. If this had not been so, I would have been troubled far more greatly. And yet pregnancy is not an abnormal affair though for each woman it is a novel and strange adventure. This act of creation, full of mystery as it is in human beings as in the simplest plant, is the fulfilment in some ways of woman's being. She should be at her best during that period, for then perhaps she is more in tune with nature's ways than at any other time.

I am glad you are going to have a baby. There is no reason at all why you or anyone else should be frightened at the prospect. It is true that your lack of robust health is a hindrance and special care is therefore necessary. But I have a feeling, and I have had it long before I heard of this occurrence, that it might actually do you good, even physically, to have a baby. In other ways also it should prove beneficial to you. So accept this fact with pleasurable expectancy and without any trace of fear or apprehension.

But it is right that no risks be taken and every possible care provided for. What you have suggested in your letter seems to me the right course. Purandare⁴⁵⁹ is probably the best man in India for this kind of thing and you should put yourself under his charge and carry out his directions. Keep near him and when it is necessary go to some hill station near Bombay. Juhu will be pleasant in the early summer but not so when the rains commence. I hope Feroze has succeeded in making suitable arrangements for you in Bombay. Remember that you must not stint money in this matter. Draw upon my account at Bachraj's unhesitatingly.

459. N.A. Purandare, a well-known gynaecologist of Bombay.

I do not know when you will be going to Bombay. Probably towards the end of March. Before you go I should like you to send me from Anand Bhawan some oddments. I am a little tired of the peculiar knives and forks and such-like things that are provided here for our use. Not that it really matters whether a fork is crooked or twisted, or even whether there is no fork at all. For all these 18 or 19 months we have carried on with the things that came our way. But I have suddenly begun to feel that there is no particular reason why I should not have better spoons & forks &c,—for a change at least. China plates are breakable things and I do not want you to send them. But send me 3 knives, 3 forks, 3 dessertspoons, 3 teaspoons and see that they are decent ones. Also some *Muradabadi katoras* which we have in the house. Three of the largest size of these *katoras* (suitable for taking bread & milk); three next smaller size of *katoras* (not too small); and three of the *Muradabadi* plates with turned up corners—something like this . These last-named will be suitable for eating *dallia* and porridge—I also want half a dozen napkins (serviettes).

I have previously asked you to send me some books from the Anand Bhawan library. There are two of these I am mentioning again here: Thompson & Garratt's *Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India*—and *The Ten Principal Upanishads*, translations by W. B. Yeats & Purohit Swami. Both of them you will find in my room or dressing room.

Also do not forget to send my old yarn which used to be in the drawer of my dressing table.

There is one other book I want but I cannot recollect its name—It is an odd name and is by one Mullick. It was published in England and is the size of an average novel. It used to be on the shelves in my room, near the door to your room.

I have often sent you names of books, mostly new and sometimes old, which I wanted you to purchase for me. But you could not get them at the usual booksellers. You might keep a list of those books with you in case they are now available. In particular I want you to note down the name of a good bookshop in Poona which often keeps books which cannot be obtained elsewhere. This is: The International Book Depot, Deccan Gymkhana, Poona Fort.

You might note the following names of books also which I want when available:

- | | | |
|--------------------|---|---|
| 1. Arthur Koestler | : | <i>Arrival & Departure</i>
(Cape 7/6) |
| 2. Do | : | <i>The Gladiators</i> (Cape 7/6) |
| 3. H.J. Laski | : | <i>Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time</i> (Allen & Unwin 15/-) |

4. *Talking to India* : B.B.C. Broadcasts (Unwin 7/6)
and Wavell's two books on Allenby.

I have sent you back some numbers of *Life &c.* This packet also contains Wendell Willkie's *One World*. Perhaps you have seen and read it. It is very well worth reading. Not that there is anything very new in it. But in the context in which it is written and considering the author's background, it is really a remarkable book and I found it exhilarating. This concept of one world hanging together, all inter-linked, is still quite difficult enough for most people, in the East or the West, to grasp, even though they may hold advanced ideas. Even when it is partly grasped intellectually, there is no emotional appreciation of it. Yet I think that this is the basic idea of our present-day world and unless we imbibe it, our other ideas are apt to be airy and without reality. Thinking so, I liked Willkie's book.

I promised to send you Salim Ali's *Book on Indian Birds*. This has been delayed as some people are looking through it. Also because I am trying to make a list of Hindustani names of the birds—not all of course but a goodly number. For this I have to rely entirely on Asaf Ali whose knowledge of bird-lore is considerable. The book will be sent to you soon and you should find it useful in identifying birds, especially in the hills.

Love to you and Feroze—

Your loving
Papu

7.3.44

Darling Bets,

I received the two little books you sent me—*The Little Prince*⁴⁶⁰ and Srinivas Iyengar's *Literature & Authorship in India*—some time ago. I liked *The Little Prince*. It is a delightful story and a novel approach.

I am worried at the continuation of Raja's asthma. I have never had anything of the kind myself but I have watched others since my boyhood. Father, to begin with, and then several of my friends. Even here it is a frequent companion and I realize how very distressing it is. Medicines and sedatives have to be given of course but it seems to

460. By Antoine de St. Exupery.

me that they can be helped greatly by a regulation of the diet and a suitable climate. What suits a particular person seems to depend on him and there is apparently no general rule. Like most other diseases, especially those which have a tendency to become chronic, the doctor can at best point the way to the patient, who can understand himself better than anyone else. I know of several cases where long-standing and painful asthma was completely got rid of. I am sure Raja can and will succeed also in getting rid of this trouble, but it is not a very quick process.

Love to you and Raja, Harsha and Ajit.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

March 11, 1944

Darling Indu,

I have received your two letters dated Feb. 22nd and March 3rd—Nos. 49 and 50. I have delayed slightly in writing to you this week as I was not quite sure where to address my letters—to Allahabad or Bombay. A letter from Betty informed me that you were likely to reach Bombay about the 7th March and this produced a certain confusion in my mind. So, instead of writing to you last Tuesday, as I should have done, I wrote to Betty instead. I have now reverted to Saturday as my writing day for you. I had moved away from it last January.

Even now I am not quite sure if this letter will catch you in Allahabad but I think that is the safer address.

This letter of mine is number 52, not including the two letters I wrote in September and October 1942 which were not delivered to you. Fifty-two weekly letters, more or less, cover a full year. In looking back at my notes I find that my letter No. 1 of this series was written on March 5th 1943 and sent to you to Naini Prison. Eight other letters followed them and then in mid-May you were released and my letters had a more normal address. Throughout this period, however, there has been no mention in them of the place from which they were written. There was a blank, as if they emerged from a nowhere or a mysterious somewhere. Through sheer habit I am continuing this blank, though I suppose it is no longer necessary, as our jailers have themselves announced publicly this secret which was no secret to anyone in

India or elsewhere. I have often thought how symbolic this farce has been, symbolic of so much that takes place in India, the covering of obvious reality, which everyone knows, with a veil which neither covers nor deceives, but which, I suppose, nevertheless represents a state of mind which prefers pretence to reality.

So now we are no longer unsubstantial creatures floating about in thin air but have got a habitation and an abode. Though we may not be visible, the cloak of invisibility has gone. Do you remember the story of the magician who went to a king and said he had a wonderful cloak which made its wearer invisible to all except fools? The cloak itself was invisible and it had to be put on a naked body which had been divested of all clothes. The king was eager to buy this and so he took off his clothes and the magician made some gestures as if he was putting a cloak round the king's body and then said that the king was invisible and nobody could see him, except those who had no wit or intelligence. And all the ministers and courtiers exclaimed: How wonderful, the king is invisible, he has disappeared. For each one of those ministers and courtiers, though he saw the king in his nakedness well enough, was afraid to say so lest he be counted a fool and a witless person!

I suppose I can write to you now of Ahmadnagar Fort and of Chand Bibi who played such a brave part here nearly four hundred years ago. It is odd how history becomes more real to us by personal association with the places where it was enacted. We have lived here now for over 19 months, and partly our isolation from the world and partly the very air of the place, laden with memories of the past, have made me think frequently of those days of long ago and, particularly, of Chand Bibi. Once you asked me, do you remember?, if I ever dreamed of Chand Bibi.

And Chand Bibi reminds me. About a month ago a cat strayed in here. She was attractive to look at and evidently well brought up and domesticated. There was no wildness about her, and right from the beginning she behaved as if it was her right to be petted and looked after. Needless to say, this superior air of distinction had its effect on us, or rather on some of us, and we started feeding it and taking some care of it. This was not done without an internal conflict. There were three groups amongst us: The pro-cat group, the anti-cat group, and the neutrals who generally disliked the cat but not enough to assert themselves. Among the anti-cat group were one or two who felt violently repelled by a cat and could not stand it at all. That kind of thing happens. Do you remember an incident on board ship when we were returning from Marseilles in December 1927 and were on our way to Colombo on a French boat? One evening at dinner a Frenchwoman,

seated at our table, suddenly stood up all trembling and shivering, and gave utterance to piercing cries: *Le chat! le chat!*⁴⁶¹ No cat was visible to any of us, but a cat was later found prowling about near our table. It was forthwith removed and calm was restored in the dining saloon. But you cannot remember this for you were too young then to have your dinner with us. You had it with two children.

Our anti-cat group was strong enough to arrange for the deportation of the cat to some place far away. They little realized the nature of cats, for within the hour, this cat was back behaving as if nothing unusual had happened. Twice this was done and twice she returned. That led to the triumph of the pro-cat group, which had more or less lain low till then not wishing to assert itself and thus perhaps to injure the feelings of the anti-cats.

So now the cat is well-established here and is fed and brushed and petted by her admirers and friends—among whom the leading spirits are the Maulana, Asaf Ali and, rather curiously, Pantji. I am also one of the friends and admirers. There are still difficulties and conflicts, when the cat approaches too near any member of the anti-cat group. But, generally speaking, this group lies low and has resigned itself to this untoward development, and only insisting on a certain distance between the cat and its members. The future is by no means clear for the cat is going to give birth to a litter of kittens, and I do not know what will happen when this increase in the cat population of Ahmadnagar Fort takes place.

But what has all this to do with Chand Bibi. A good deal, for I have named the cat Chand Bibi—not meaning the slightest disrespect to the soldier-lady. Briefly I call her Chando.

I have received a parcel of foreign periodicals sent by you but this did not contain (as you said) the *Journal d'un homme de quarante ans* or the book Frazer has sent for me. I cannot make out what has happened to them.

I am glad you have got a car. It is so long since I owned a car—13 years to be accurate—that I have lost the mental habit of thinking of it as a possession.

I hope Feroze will succeed in making satisfactory arrangements for you in or round Bombay. Obviously you must have some friend with you. But in addition to such a friend it would be advisable for you to engage a nurse-companion, Mrs. Vakil or Vatsala could advise you or pick out some suitable person for you. Having some such additional

461. The cat! the cat!

companion for six months or so will be some expense but it will certainly be worthwhile.

You had better keep my new Kashmir pullover with you—or use it if you can. I shall not require it till next month. But the little shawl might be sent to me. I want some light covering for the shoulders occasionally. This place is not at all cold but sometimes, unexpectedly, we have chilly mornings.

About Yunus's medicine it is difficult to advise you. Such medicines are often good tonics but it is just possible that they may not agree with a particular person. You have to be careful also in your present condition. Better follow your doctor's advice. Ask Yunus or his friend for details about the medicine, the recipe, etc. Usually they are well-known stock remedies which *vaid*s know. Then consult your doctor. If he agrees take it, but even so begin with small doses and watch reactions.

Some time ago I sent you back Hogben's *Mathematics for the Million*. I want you to send this book to Mahmud's son Said. He has asked for it. It should be addressed to :

Syed Said-ur-Rahman
C/o Dr. Syed Mahmud
Haque Manzil
Chapra—B.N.W. Ry. (Behar)

Tell him to keep it.

Is Feroze getting *Fortune* from America? And are you getting *Asia*? You might keep Richard Walsh informed of what you are getting and what you are not getting.

I was glad to learn that Dr. Lin was going to pay a brief visit to Allahabad.⁴⁶² I met him at a party in Paris in 1938. Were you there then?

Love to you and Feroze.

Your loving
Papu

462. Lin Yutang stayed at Anand Bhawan on 10 and 11 March 1944. He expressed profound regret in an interview that he was unable to meet Jawaharlal for whom he had tremendous admiration. "Still it is a privilege to stay at the historic Anand Bhawan as the guest of the Nehru family."

March 13. Monday

On Saturday I received a letter from Nan which contained surprising information. I knew that Ranjit had made no will. I learnt now that according to his father's will the joint property could only descend to male issues of Pratap & Ranjit. So, apparently, Ranjit's share of the joint property goes to Gokul & Vasant, Pratap's sons. No part of it goes to Nan or Chand, Tara or Rita. Nan only gets the personal property of Ranjit, which is not much. Even this is out of reach at present and all manner of legal formalities have to be gone through. So Nan was suddenly very hard up without even the wherewithal for current expenses, and the future had a very straitened appearance. Fortunately Chand's & Tara's education for the next three or four years had been provided for.

Odd how such accidental occurrences—Ranjit's carelessness in not making a will—make a difference to our lives. I wrote a long letter to Nan today and sent her a cheque for Rs. 2000/- on Bachhraj—

x

x

x

x

Lin Yutang has been visiting Anand Bhawan. This pleased me though I felt sad at missing him.

March 18. 1944

Darling Indu,

There has been no letter from you during the last week. I have been wanting to send you some books but not being sure of your movements, I have held them back. There is also a note⁴⁶³ on bird-names I have prepared which is awaiting despatch. From a letter I have received from Betty it appears that you are still in Allahabad but you might leave the place soon.

Betty seems to be worried about all manner of things, chiefly Raja's illness. She has an unusual capacity for being depressed at the minor happenings of life. She revives soon and her letters reflect her moods. I wish she could develop a more balanced view of life's vagaries. Perhaps it is due to long-continued existence within a relatively small circle

463. Not printed.

and lack of change. And yet she is so accustomed to her life in Bombay that she misses it elsewhere.

She tells me that she is trying to make arrangements for you and herself at some hill station and is having considerable difficulty in getting accommodation. It will be good if she can be with you but I hope this arrangement does not come in the way of her looking after Raja. Raja is far from well and requires attention and company.

Betty asks me about your expenses. I have already written to you about your drawing on my account at Bachhraj's. Please do so, and if Betty is incurring any expense on your behalf, send the money to her. She has her own financial worries and no further burden should be cast on her.

Ooty is mentioned as a possible place of residence by Betty. That is a good place of course but is it not a little too far from Bombay? Perhaps this does not matter and the suitability of the place is more important than the distance.

I hope you will take servants with you. Hari is always useful but he does not approve of long absence from Allahabad. Still I think it would be worthwhile taking him.

In my last letter I asked you to send me the new *pashmina* shawl you have received from Kashmir. This was rather foolish as I really do not require it till the end of the year. I have shawls enough. So keep this new shawl for the present and use it yourself. It is safer and better to use it than to put it away for the summer and rainy season when the insects come out and search for such articles of diet.

As our place of detention is not only publicly known but may now be publicly announced,⁴⁶⁴ I want you to arrange to have two newspapers sent to me direct here. These are the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* and *The Hindu* (of Madras). The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* people have, as a matter of fact, been sending me a copy of their paper from Calcutta. They were addressing it C/o the Government of Bombay. This involved delay. So please tell them to send this copy direct now addressed to me—C/o Major M. Sendak I.M.S., C/o The Commander, The Fort, Ahmadnagar. (Two C/os for additional security!)

Please also ask them to get hold of the correct spelling of my name. Not that I mind a mis-spelling; but it is as well to be correct. They can send the paper either from Calcutta (as they are doing now) or Allahabad—whichever is more convenient.

464. In reply to a question in the Central Assembly on 5 March 1944, the Home Member said: "The members of the Congress Working Committee are detained in Ahmadnagar."

The Hindu has not been sent to me here but it used to come regularly to Anand Bhawan. Please ask them to send it to me here to the above address.

Chando Bibi, the cat, has given birth to a kitten—just one, and not an indiscriminate litter. That indicates her superior nature.

I have sent you a packet of old foreign periodicals.

Love to you and Feroze

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 53.

Though newspapers might be sent to us direct to Ahmadnagar Fort, letters must continue to go to the Bombay Secretariat to be suitably vetted there before being forwarded.

22.3.44

Betty darling,

Life is full of untoward happenings and since the world began persons with sensitive minds and those who are called philosophers have tried to understand its complex and baffling texture. Others, dissatisfied with many of its aspects, have sought to alter them. In the course of time it has changed gradually but it still fails to satisfy our minds or our impulses. Everywhere there is what is called the strength of life. In its crude aspects this is evident enough, but it is equally evident in the sphere of the mind. All action is really a challenge to life. Only those minds who are in the ruts and fearful of any change, refuse this challenge, and yet even they cannot escape the hard knocks of life. Possibly they get them more, or sense them more, because they fear them more and are often taken unawares. The only real conflict which is oppressive is the conflict of the mind which arises from doubt and indecision—the old question of Hamlet—to be or not to be, to do or not to do. If one decides one way or the other, it is done with whatever the consequences. The conflict is over, though other conflicts will no doubt trouble the mind. To look back continually with regret is to lose oneself in the unchangeable past and thus miss both the present and the future. And so more regrets follow, and we wallow in a very ocean of regret, never catching up to the living moment. Surely that is not a satisfactory state of affairs. Often enough it is the little things

of life that pursue us and trouble us far more than the big things. And yet it is the big things that count. We may be having a bad time in India, but think of the horror that has enveloped so many of our friends in Europe and China and elsewhere. For years now I have had no word, no news, from some dear friends in France. Am I to complain then, because of what happens to me?

To lose our perspective in life is to lose our bearings. To look back is necessarily to look away from the present and the future which count. We must face the ever-changing present and have the power of quick decisions. Decide this way or that after weighing the pros and cons and act up to the decision. Not to decide is to live in a fog of doubt and misgiving. Whether it is a matter relating to the narrow sphere of the family or the larger sphere of life, one must solve and resolve our problems as they arise and go ahead, not regretting overmuch or pining for what is not, not complaining, not holding others responsible for something that might have been otherwise.

That is the only way to face life even in more or less normal times. Much more is it so during abnormal times, such as we live in.

So many things happen which are not to one's liking. We cannot allow ourselves to be swept by this or else we become straw tossed hither and thither by conflicting waves of emotion. That produces unhappiness. If we attach ourselves to any big purpose we have to attain strength and equilibrium.

Love to you and Raja and the children.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

March 22, 1944

TO SUPERINTENDENT, DETENTION CAMP, AHMADNAGAR FORT⁴⁶⁵

Dear Mr. Superintendent,

I desire to have for reference the Defence of India Act and the various rules made thereunder, also the ordinances which are related to it. In the course of our conversation today you informed me that you did not

465. Maharashtra Government, Home Department (Special) File No. 1110 (50) B(10) V.

possess these, and further that the District Magistrate was not agreeable to supplying these to us without special permission from Government. This has surprised me as it is very extraordinary procedure to deny a detenu the very act and rules under which he is supposed to be detained. Normally even a prisoner in jail is supplied with the jail rules and acts which he may need for reference. Does this mean that so far as we are concerned there is some peculiar mystery about the Defence Act and Rules which must be hidden from us?

I should like to have these publications as early as possible, not only for reference, but to keep them for possible future use. Any cost incurred in obtaining them may be charged to my account.

This matter raises a question of principle and I shall therefore be grateful to you if you could let me have a written answer.

I shall also be obliged if you could kindly let me have a set of the rules or conditions governing our internment here.

It is possible that I might have to trouble you later for copies of other acts or public statutes.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

March 25, 1944

New Year's Day Samvat 2001.

Darling Indu,

Some days ago I saw in an old copy of *The Leader* that you had gone to Bombay. Now a letter has just come from Betty confirming your arrival there. My last letter to you, sent just a week ago to Allahabad, must have missed you there.

I am glad to learn that you are fit and well and that Purandare has given you an 'AI' certificate of health. That is as it should be. I gather you are going to Matheran with Betty & Raja. Where is Feroze? Did you leave him in Allahabad?

I have sent you—to the Bombay address—Salim Ali's book on birds—Although you have the old edition, the new one might interest you. It is true that some fairly well-known birds are missing in this book. I am enclosing a note on the names of some of the birds in Hindustani. This note has been prepared entirely with Asaf Ali's help and, naturally, gives the names current roundabout Delhi, though many of them have a much wider significance. But I cannot guarantee the correctness of the list.

Today is New Year's Day according to the *Samvat* era and we begin a new millennium—a word with a double meaning, but only one meaning, the literal one, is obvious today. But the mills of the gods grind slowly. All good wishes to you in the New Year.

Tell Betty that I have received the six boxes of cigarettes she sent me.

Betty asks me about the Doon School for the boys. I do not know much about it though I have visited it once and have met the headmaster, Foot, and some other teachers there. The layout of the school is very good and it has fine & extensive grounds. Good climate. I rather like Foot as well as one or two other masters. These people aim at reproducing the English public school atmosphere and methods with only slight variations to suit Indian conditions. There are certain advantages about this, and certainly I am not at all sorry that I went to Harrow. But the disadvantages are also obvious and perhaps they are more evident in an Indian environment. A certain unreality, a separation from normal Indian life, is almost inevitable. Living standards are high and so is the cost. I was told 2 or 3 years ago that for one boy the cost was Rs. 1500 a year—for two brothers probably Rs. 2500, but I am not sure of these figures. The teachers are very well paid. Costs must have gone up.

Probably if Harsha & Ajit went there later, they would feel, to begin with at least, very lonely and deserted. Boys are deliberately left to themselves although a quiet & unobtrusive supervision is exercised. If they can easily fit in with the other boys, well and good; if not, then it is difficult. School life & atmosphere are so different from home that the change is marked and may produce all manner of results. For my part I think too much home living is not too good for children. They develop egocentric habits which unfit them to some extent for the subsequent cooperation as well as the rough and tumble of life.

Normally boys go to public schools in England after they have spent some years in a so-called preparatory school (boarding).

It is very difficult for me to advise Betty & Raja about the kids for, though I know them, I do not know them enough, and anyway I have not seen them now for nearly two years. These two years must have made a difference to both. So I can only give general advice which may not be suited to the particular case. I think that probably a boarding school now would do them good. It would take them out of the home atmosphere and give them knowledge of others, of how to shift for themselves, decide for themselves, not depend too much on things being done for them. It would broaden their outlook. Indirectly, but definitely, this is good for physical health also. In the company of

others and in cooperation & competition with them, a boy eats, plays, runs, studies, sleeps more normally and without thinking much of it.

I do not know at all the Scindia School at Gwalior. But if it is a good school then it might be worthwhile to adhere to the previous plan and send them there. If after a term or two it is felt that they are not prospering there, it is always possible to withdraw them and make other arrangements. The reasons advanced for their not going there apply in a large measure to the Doon School also. Times will remain unsettled and the distance of the Doon School is far greater. As for Betty & Raja feeling lonely without them, that is something that cannot be avoided. The only real consideration is whether at their present ages & in their present state of health, they will prosper or not by going to a boarding school. I cannot say, but it is by no means obvious that home is better for health than school. The fact that the Gwalior school only takes boys between the ages 7 and 9 indicates that they specialise more or less for those ages.

I wrote to you about our cat—Chando Bibi—She has raised a moral problem for us. So far we had been making friends with the sparrows and several generations of them have come and gone since we came here. We feed them and they have almost become domesticated. When hungry they demand food vociferously. Some are daring enough to go and sit on Maulana's knee to remind him that it is time for feeding. Chando's outlook on sparrows is radically different. There is no milk of human kindness about it, though normally she puts on an air of extreme piety and mews sanctimoniously, as if she were a perfectly harmless animal oppressed by a harsh and unfeeling world. She sits quietly in the sun, all rolled up, as if communing with her inner self on higher things, and then suddenly, *ben presto!*⁴⁶⁶ she darts like a stroke of lightning—and a sparrow is no more. The fact that the sparrows have got used to us makes them careless and easy prey for Chando. So daily Chando swallows a sparrow, occasionally varying her diet by getting hold of a mouse or rat. And then resumes her quiet contemplation as if nothing had happened! Thus she brings the realities of nature and the world very near to us, and the difficulty of observing moral laws, which so often run counter to each other.

Chando, as I wrote to you, has given birth to a kitten—just one. We provided a cushion for the mother and baby and they approved of it for the first few days. But there is a saying that a cat changes the place of abode of its kittens at least seven times for fear that some enemy might find them out and destroy them. The chief enemy is the father

466. Very much in a hurry.

who, for some reason or other, takes especial delight in eating them up! There is no father in evidence here but the old instinctive urge works and so Chando carries the kitten by the scruff of the neck and hides it in odd places. Two days ago she carried it, over a partition wall, into a small store room here and deposited it in a sack containing charcoal. At night the place was locked up and Chando could not reach her baby. So she filled the night with her moaning and wailing and prevented us all from sleeping.

Well, I have told you of the major occurrences in Ahmadnagar Fort during the last few days. Of such is the texture of life here. Whether they are looked upon as important or not is merely a question in relativity. They occupy our minds and our time here and so, to us, they have importance.

I find that the weaving done here is not too good. It is not close enough. And so I think I shall send my yarn to you or to Betty so that you can pass it on to Psyche and she can have a sari made—Amma writes to me that she has got Beri-beri. I am very sorry to learn this.

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 54.

March 29, Wednesday—

Four days ago was *Chaitra Shukla 1*—first day of the *Samvat 2001*—according to another reckoning (according to which the Kashmiris observe *Nauroz*) this New Year's Day will be a fortnight later, on the first day of the dark fortnight of the moon— Either way we are on the verge of the new *Samvat* year. A year ago, on *Nauroz* day, I wrote in this diary something about the beginning of a new century, a new millennium. I was not quite correct then, as the new century really begins with 2001, that is now. So we are launched on the millennial year!

There has been much in the papers about the Vikram celebrations.⁴⁶⁷ Certainly it was worthwhile celebrating this event, but it is amazing

467. 13 April 1944 marked the completion of the 20th century of the Indian era of Vikramaditya.

how we get swept away by our emotions and sentiments into distorting or inventing history. Vikram is and has been a popular figure for nearly 2000 years, or at least 1500 years. All manner of stories have grown up about him, and these stories of heroism and self-sacrifice have found their way in translations to most countries of Asia and Europe. It is said that Nausherwan⁴⁶⁸ of Iran had them translated into Persian 1500 years ago. In Tibetan, Chinese, Mongolian, Arabic & in European languages, they found their way in various forms, though often Vikram's name is not mentioned. In India Vikram became the ideal king, the ideal man—warrior, great musician and patron of art and literature, and above all a human being full of sympathy for others and the desire to serve them. His name became symbolic and many kings adopted it—Vikramaditya—like Caesar in Europe.

Significant how a nation's heroes mirror the soul and ideals of a people. In European countries it is usually the great warrior and conqueror who is thus honoured. In China, the great philosopher—In India it was this combination of warrior, artist and public servant, and of these 3 aspects the last two were emphasized most.

And yet nobody knows who Vikram was, or when he existed, or whether he existed at all! Such is our lack of the sense of history. A figure built up by the imagination is enough for us—how much more satisfying than any truly historical character can be! Or we take some historical person as a foundation for a structure made up out of our fancies and the urges of our hearts. What does it matter if this embodiment of our dreams has little to do with reality? It becomes real enough for the people and it influences them and moulds them.

But this is a dangerous method at any time—more so in the matter-of-fact world of today. It is never safe to lose contact with reality. Reality takes its revenge, comes back to us and takes us unawares.

It is said, or tradition says, that Vikram hurled back foreign invaders from India and became a symbol of India's unity. Proof of this? Hardly any, so far as I know. And certainly it is a wild exaggeration to talk of the unity of India in any political sense in those days. It would be true enough even then to recognize the cultural unity of India.

So Vikram has become a subject for debate & argument, and welcoming the celebrations as I do, I have been distressed by the unscientific approach of many of our learned men—

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468. Nausherwan-e-Adil, King of Iran from 531 to 578.

Indu has not written to me for three weeks. It was through an old copy of *The Leader* that I found out that she had gone to Bombay. Subsequently Betty's letter confirmed this and also informed me that she was keeping well. That comforted me. She is going with Betty & Raja to Matheran⁴⁶⁹ for a few weeks.

It is odd how Indu suddenly goes off into the non-writing mood. Sometimes she writes lovely letters which are full of a desire to come near me, not merely physically but psychologically. And then—a blank for a long interval. That has been so ever since she was a child. Gradually I discovered some reasons for this, but those reasons no longer apply. Still the old mood comes back and she retires into her shell.

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Off and on I have been spinning. But it has grown quite a burden and normally I would have given it up for a while at least. But I wanted to spin enough yarn for a sari and Profulla Babu now says that 35000 yards are required for this. At first he had suggested that 26000 or so might be enough, then 30000. But having examined my yarn and found it finer than he had expected—it was about 30 count—he increased the figure to 35000 yards. So I struggled away at it and I am now in my last thousand. I have already done over 34000—The end is near. After that I shall put away the charkha and concentrate on other work a little more.

My reluctance to spin is partly due to the growing dryness of the atmosphere which often results in the yarn breaking. But really what is working in my mind is the desire to begin some solid writing work. Often I have thought of it during these months here but the desire was not strong enough to overcome the hesitation, for hesitation there is. The subject in my mind is difficult and I am not at all sure that I can do it justice—a survey of India's story from the remote past, almost a psychological study—her thoughts & fancies—her strength & weakness—her attempts to solve her problems &c, &c—I want to deal with this as a kind of discovery of India by my own mind. A difficult task—yet I have one advantage. This fits in with my own mind's working during the past, and especially during the last few years. It will thus not be extraneous work, but something very much in tune with myself.

This of course may result in a subjective account, more revealing of my own mental processes than of India's story objectively considered. That cannot be helped. And perhaps there is value in this approach

469. A small hill station near Bombay.

and it helps one to understand this complex past better than the dry record of the 'pure' historian.

I hesitate to start—yet I have also a feeling that once I begin my mind and pen will flow on. At present the mind is in a kind of incubation period.

In another few days I shall finish this spinning business and also a new book I am just reading—Benedetto Croce's *History as the Story of Liberty*.⁴⁷⁰ An interesting and thought-provoking book. And then forward to writing!

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A vague fear sometimes steals over me, now that I am seriously thinking of writing, that some interruptions might come and prevent me from finishing my work. We might even get released! Such release would be welcome of course. Still I would like to have time to finish my new venture before I plunge again into political & such-like activity. How much time do I require? I do not know. I do not want to write at any great length but the mind & the pen are not wholly under control when they are in motion. I imagine four clear months ought to suffice—say to August next. Just when we complete two years here.

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About two months ago, talking to Asaf, I suggested that within six months the situation would have developed sufficiently to lead to a change in our condition. By the situation I meant a complex—here in India, within England, the war, and various other factors. By change in our condition I did not mean an immediate change at the end of six months, but that the forces working for change would be strong enough then to force the pace. I envisaged certainly a real change by the end of this year. And yet I could not say what the nature of the change would be. I used various arguments but really my feeling could not easily be expressed in fixed arguments.

Recent developments have added to this feeling. Subtle but far-reaching changes are taking place, I feel, in the Indian situation, though they may not be obvious yet. I think the whole background of the Congress-Muslim League position is changing, bringing inevitable consequences in its train.

All this is not so much because of the Assembly's rejection of the Finance Bill and the cooperation of the Congress & the League in this,

470. In this book, Benedetto Croce regards liberty as the explanatory principle of history and the moral ideal of humanity. "It is the eternal creator of history, and itself the subject of every history."

though that counts & the tone of speeches was good.⁴⁷¹ There is something more about it all which I cannot quite grasp but which I feel definitely.

So it is not at all unlikely that within six months or so we might be out. Out, for what? Hard work and trouble galore. No peace. But who wants peace? I have had enough of this peace of the cemetery and I long for action, action & hard concentrated work.

March 30. Thursday

A sheaf of letters today—three. Two long ones, from Indu and Nan, and a short one from Betty.

These letters carried me away suddenly from Ahmadnagar Fort to the world of action and problems and worry about a host of petty matters. There was nothing much to worry about in them, only normal occurrences which fill our minds in everyday life and which require attention. Having received that attention they pass away and are almost forgotten. But here the mind exists on another plane, not exactly empty yet far removed from day-to-day life. And so they assume a greater importance. Also, perhaps, because nothing can be done about them immediately and so they hang on in the mind.

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Both Nan and Indu have sent long accounts of Lin Yutang's visit to Allahabad—How excited he was on coming to Anand Bhawan, how delighted in conversation. And his pride in his three daughters two of whom, aged 17 and 20, have already written creditable novels.⁴⁷²

He went to see the hospital and, asked to write in the hospital book, he wrote "To the eternal spirit of the pure lotus," and made a sketch of a lotus. The beautiful touch of the artist—and an Oriental artist.

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471. The Congress and the Muslim League joined hands in the Central Assembly and rejected the Finance Bill on the ground that they were not prepared to vote money for the spending of which they had no responsibility. Yamin Khan, a Muslim League member, told the Assembly that the "action and misdeeds of the Government" had brought the Congress and the League together. Bhulabhai Desai declared that the Congress and the League could form a national government.

472. Adet, Anor and Meinei; *Our Family* recounts their relations with their father.

Nan's little troubles and difficulties—financial, her book, the girls &c. I should have liked to write to her immediately and make some suggestions which might help her. But I must wait for another week when the next day for my writing comes.

x x x x

I was wrong about *Nauroz* in my yesterday's note. The Kashmiri *Nauroz*, like the Maharashtrian, was on March 25th—*Chaitra Shukla 1 Samvat 2001*.

x x x x

About three weeks ago a question was asked in the Central Assembly in Delhi about the possibility of Bapu being transferred to some other place.⁴⁷³ The answer was that this was under consideration. Immediately people here thought that he was likely to be sent here—to Ahmadnagar Fort. Some days later the Superintendent appeared with a measuring tape and noted down the length & width of our rooms. Also there was some measuring & examining of some rooms opposite which are at present either used as store rooms or occupied by warders. This confirmed our previous impression—Probably the Govt. of India were enquiring about the accommodation here. If Bapu and his party of six or seven come here, we shall be a little crowded. But of course we can fit in.

It would be good if Bapu comes. His coming would shake us all up and upset all our routines. That in itself is something to look forward to. But far more important is the fact that it will give us a chance for long & full discussions with him, such as we seldom have outside—For outside we are always pursued by problems which demand some kind of immediate solution. That immediate attempt to solve them is in reality no solution at all. Nevertheless we carry on in that way from day to day, never really catching up to events, but remaining slaves to them.

Will Bapu come here? It seems to me 50-50 either way.

x x x x

473. The Bombay Government had suggested the transfer of Mahatma Gandhi to Ahmadnagar Fort mainly as a matter of convenience since the party in the Aga Khan's house had been reduced to a small number. When asked in the Central Assembly on 15 March 1944 whether the Government intended to transfer Mahatma Gandhi to some other place as he had lost "two of his nearest and dearest life partners" in the Aga Khan's house the Home Member replied that the suggestion would be considered.

The news that Japanese forces had entered⁴⁷⁴ India in the North East (Manipur State) was significant and yet not really important from the war point of view. It seemed clear that this could not be a major effort. A real invasion through the dense forests of the frontier between Assam & North Burma hardly seemed a feasible proposition. At the same time it could not be a negligible affair and I expected that the Japanese would capture Imphal and give some trouble.

Pantji became rather excited when he first heard of it. Possibly he expected big happenings. He suggested to me that we might write to the Viceroy and send him a brief message for the public. The message to remind the public that the Congress has always stood for resistance to the invader and to submit even passively to invasion was degrading for us and unworthy of people desiring freedom. The idea appealed to me, subject to more definite news about the Japanese inroad. We knew that probably there would be no unanimity of opinion on sending such a message. Not that anyone would disagree with its purport but some of us disliked the idea of communicating with the Viceroy. Also, it would depend on the Viceroy as to whether our message was issued to the public or not.

When Maulana had suggested our writing to the Viceroy some months ago I had disagreed, as had most others. That writing involved a departure from our August Resolution position, even though this would not have been explicit. I did not like this. Now it seemed to me that we could write without touching the August Resolution or our fundamental position.

More detailed news of the Japanese advance seemed to indicate that it was a relatively small affair. Pantji thought that this did not justify any particular step on our part. So for the time being we dropped the idea. We did not discuss it with the others.

March 31st. Friday—

We complete six hundred days here in Ahmadnagar Fort today! In 1940-41 I spent just 400 days in prison (Gorakhpur, Lucknow, Dehra Dun). So I have now spent 1000 days in prison or detentions during this war period.

474. A Japanese offensive had succeeded in penetrating the Manipur State border and a battle was raging 34 miles from Imphal.

April 1st 1944

Darling Indu,

I have your letter of the 24th March from Bombay. My last letter, sent just a week ago to Bombay, must have missed you there, as did the previous one, addressed to Allahabad. I hope both managed to reach you. I sent also Salim Ali's book on birds to you to Bombay.

Your big parcel has not arrived yet. I suppose it will come in due time. I am annoyed at having asked you to send me spoons and forks and knives. I had no idea you were so hard up for them and that they were not easily obtainable in the markets, though I might have guessed the latter. Now that you have sent most of these things, there is no help for it, but I wish you had not. Do not trouble about the teaspoons. I really do not want any of these things and it is easy enough to carry on with the oddments supplied here, though they are not pleasant to the touch or to the sight. Even if we did not have them, it would make precious little difference.

I get these brainwaves and ask you to send various articles for no particular rhyme or reason, except to experience a change. I hate falling into a rut and in prison and detention there is such a great deal of this business. From time to time I make petty changes in the arrangement of my bed and table & chair or bookshelves &c. Or I rearrange some flowerpots in our dining room, or shift about something else. This gives me a temporary sensation of change and the even flow of an unchanging existence is superficially interrupted. In the dead level of being even a ripple of becoming counts. My attempts at these minor changes are not always appreciated, sometimes, to my secret annoyance, they are hardly noticed! But I carry on and find some inner satisfaction in the process.

It is the sameness, the utter monotony, of the days that pursues one in prison; the absence of any highlights, of mountain peaks and valleys that give significance to space and time. The mind of course goes up and down and can, if it so wills, range the universe. Yet the mind itself has a tendency to become dull and smooth and even without the rugged edges of life. I combat that tendency, not without success. It is odd how the sense of time changes in prison. The distinguishing marks of experience and feeling and events are so few that one loses the normal sense of time. Sometimes, indeed often enough, it drags wearily and yet the general long range effect is as if it had not passed. Inevitably the mind clings to outstanding events which mark off the course of life, and the major event in the life of the prisoner is his arrest and

removal from normal life. So that day of arrest becomes, as it were, yesterday in his mind, however long the interval that might have elapsed since then.

I try to break that feeling by artificially creating barriers and landmarks. We observe, in a minor way, anniversaries and special days, *Nauroz* and the like. Sometimes these days are very artificial. For instance, yesterday we completed 600 days of our existence here. Nobody else had noticed this not very important fact but I insisted on making it a kind of landmark. And I remembered that I had spent exactly 400 days in Gorakhpur and Dehra Dun jails on the last occasion I went to prison in 1940-41. This totalled up to 1000 days since the war began.

I have a horror—perhaps because of advancing age—of getting physically and mentally into a rut, of losing suppleness of body and mind, of just carrying on without effort on the smooth flowing river of life. That river is not very smooth and it is turbulent enough; so I need not fear. But I carry on an unceasing struggle against the passivity of the mind and the inertia that comes from it.

مجھے یہ ڈر ہے دل زندہ تو نہ مر جائے
کہ زندگانی عبارت ہے تیرے جینے سے (درد)

Dard, the Urdu poet, has a couplet:

मुझे यह डर है दिल-ए-ज़िंदा, तू न मर जाए ।
के ज़िंदगानी इबारत है तेरे जीने से ॥⁴⁷⁵

No, I do not think it is so bad as all that. I am not afraid of this and there is little chance of such a fate overtaking me.

I notice that you have sent me a large quantity of yarn. Surely all this cannot be mine. Probably you have collected the yarn garlands that are sometimes given. However, I shall be able to separate them easily. As it happens, I have almost decided not to get my yarn woven here as the work done here is not good enough. So I propose, later, to send all the old and new stuff back to you or Betty. This can be given over to Psyche who I suppose knows where and how to get it properly woven. I have spun enough here for a sari. Where shall I send my yarn? If I send it to Matheran, this will merely add to your luggage and your troubles. Also it may miss you there. Probably the Bombay address will be safest. Tell Psyche about it. There may be nearly 58000 yards, old and new. A sari, I calculate, requires at most

475. Dard: That you may grow cheerless,
O lively heart of mine,
Is a dreadful thought to me :
For life only exists so long as you live !

34000 or 35000 yards. The rest can be made up into an odd piece.

I am sorry about Fraser's book, *The Mountain Way*,⁴⁷⁶ going astray. I hope you will be able to trace it. I am sending you today the following books—to the Matheran address:

Tod's <i>Annals of Rajasthan</i>	3 volumes
Jim Phelan's	<i>Jail Journey</i>
Andre Maurois	<i>Call No Man Happy</i>
Iyengar	<i>Literature & Authorship in India</i>
Ghose	<i>The Brain of India.</i>

Tod, in parts, is very interesting and I think you will like it. It is a classic though it is not very accurate always. Aurobindo Ghose's little essay⁴⁷⁷ is an old one—probably written in 1907. 'The first few pages of it are so astonishingly silly that it is worth reading just because of this!

I do not know Matheran—I have never been there. I suppose it is rather like Dehra Dun, so far as the climate is concerned. After your visit to Matheran it will be good if you can join Mrs. Vakil at Mahabaleshwar.

I am sorry Purandare dealt with you rather casually. He is not very prepossessing in his appearance or ways, but he is competent. I should not worry, if I was you, but carry on normally. For every woman pregnancy and childbirth is always a great adventure, even though this adventure is as old as life itself. Yet there is nothing abnormal about it, and the more one looks upon it as a normal everyday affair the better. There is practically no risk or danger if ordinary precautions are taken. The first two or three months are rather disturbing as all manner of inner changes are taking place then. These adjustments take place and normality returns. The seventh month and after require attention.

Purandare is hardly the man to advise you in detail about diet &c. Any doctor can do so. Indeed you can advise yourself. If you like, get a book on the subject—Even apart from that you know enough about diet. Milk is always good. When you are in Bombay next, it might be worthwhile to see Bharucha for general overhaul, directions &c.

476. By L.G. Irving; it is an anthology in prose and verse about mountains and mountaineering.

477. *The Brain of India*; this was originally published in the weekly *Karmayogin* in 1909. The author contended that in making education national it was necessary that the fundamental principles of ancient instruction perfected by yoga should be restored and "the spirit, ideals and methods of the ancient and mightier India in a yet more effective form and with a more modern organisation should be revived."

I am glad Mridu is going with her family to Kashmir. This ought to do her good. She requires rest and looking after.

Tell Betty I have received her two letters dated 21st and 28th March. Also 5 copies of *Life* which she sent me and 2 books: Croce's *History as the Story of Liberty* & Sagittarius: *Targets*.⁴⁷⁸ These books will be returned to her later.

I enjoyed reading, in your letter and Nan's, accounts of Dr. Lin's visit to Anand Bhawan. I suppose I shall meet him again some day. Meanwhile, it is something to have this vicarious experience—His brief message for the hospital was so typical of an artist—and an Oriental artist.

Do you hear from Walsh? Keep on pegging away at him. Letters are very uncertain these days—some reach, others don't. I am surprised that the *Reader's Digest* & *Asia* do not reach me at all (also some other American magazines) when *Life* &c. manage to come through. Does *Fortune* reach Feroze?

Puphi (Nan) has asked my advice about some business matters. Normally I shall write to her early next week but I do not know where to write to. She is now in Bombay I suppose but I do not know her address there. I suppose Sakina Mansion is closed up, now that all of you are away. Pratap's address I do not know, besides she might have left Bombay by the time my letter reaches her. So probably I shall address my letters to her to Allahabad. But I would like a message to reach her as soon as possible, preferably while she is in Bombay. Will you therefore send her this message soon?:

Message begins: "I have received your letter of March 22nd with its enclosure. I shall send a fuller reply next week and address it to Allahabad. Meanwhile, I just want to say that it will be desirable for you to have a friendly talk with Pratap about various business and domestic matters. The ordinary legal processes about succession certificates &c. will take their course but every matter connected with them should be cleared up previously in a friendly informal way. This will save not only long correspondence but any possible misunderstanding. Such matters, relating to money affairs, have an odd way of rubbing people the wrong way. This must be avoided at all costs. It is never worthwhile. Pratap's advice will be valuable and should be asked for. He is the right person to be consulted. His letter to you displays slight irritation and might have been expressed differently.

478. It consists of verse satires of the author, published in different journals, which are mainly criticism of life from within the armed camp. Sagittarius (the pen name of Olga Katzin) wrote satirical verse weekly in the *New Statesman*.

But I can thoroughly understand his viewpoint. That is the natural viewpoint of the average person dealing with ancestral property. Personally I might have acted somewhat differently but I am not very normal in such matters.

If Pratap and you want that I, together with you, should be joint trustees for Tara and Rita, I have no objection. But I do not think I am a suitable person for this job. I am too much entangled in other matters. Besides my being in detention might delay matters. The right course seems to me that you and Pratap should be joint trustees for Tara and Rita. This trusteeship, I take it, is for the minority period only. It is right that the money which is transferred to the children should be made as secure as possible and not liable to political or other developments. Therefore, if you agree, I would suggest to you to ask Pratap to join you as a trustee for Tara & Rita. You may, if you like, tell him that this is my wish.

As for Chand, I gather that nothing further has to be done except to collect & make a list of her assets. These also should be made as secure as possible, though no trustees are necessary, and they will stand in her name.

It is desirable to have everything precisely defined and cleared up. This need not be done immediately but the beginnings of the process must be laid now and the sooner it is ended the better. There is nothing more distressing than a state of confusion and misunderstanding in family & domestic matters, especially in regard to money matters. Therefore always precision and clearness are necessary. It really does not matter much whether a little more or less money is forthcoming. What matters is that everyone should know where each person stands. That gives peace of mind & freedom from worry and waste of time over unsettled matters." Message ends.

Yesterday we had a new visitor—a baboon, लंगूर. Naturally we liked this diversion and made friendly overtures to him, offering him some stale bread &c. Encouraged, he returned in the afternoon. It was then that Chando, the cat, saw him. Whether this was her first sight of a baboon or not I do not know. Some deep-seated racial fear and antagonism affected her and almost paralysed her. She sat transfixed, immovable, gazing at him as if hypnotised. The *langur*, which was about 20 feet away, paid no attention to her. Suddenly he made a movement which had nothing to do with her, and then the spell seemed to break and she fled for life, and ran and ran, faster than I had ever seen her run. She went away as far as she could and then secretly crept to the corner where her baby kitten was. There she has remained all the evening, and night and morning, regardless of food. The sparrows have

thus had a vicarious revenge. The terror she caused to the sparrows has come to her.

I have just received a packet of foreign papers coming via Anand Bhawan, presumably sent by you: *Foreign Affairs Quarterly*, *Amerasia*, *Free World*, 2. *Time*, *Nation*. (Sometimes I get double copies of the same issue of *Time*.) Also Khalil Gibran's⁴⁷⁹ little book *The Prophet*⁴⁸⁰ sent by someone from America.

Love

Your loving
Papu

April 3. Monday

I have at last finished my allotted length of yarn—35000 yards—and so an end of spinning for some considerable time at least—Indu has sent me my old D.D.J. yarn—the remains of it. Today I have sent all my yarns to Indu to Matheran, together with various other things. My yarn spun here is 33 count—It is enough for a sari.

Indu has also sent some decent spoons & forks & knives & *katoras* &c. It was pleasant to use them.

April 5. Wednesday

It appears fairly certain now that Bapu will be sent here. Bhandari, the I.G., came round today to have a look at the unoccupied rooms. Also there are whispers.

479. Khalil Gibran (1883-1931); Syrian-American mystic, poet and artist.

480. Consisting of 28 prose poems by the "Prophet", who calls himself the "Prophet of God, in quest of the uttermost.

April 8, 1944

Darling Indu,

I have your letter of the 28th March from Matheran, written soon after you arrived there. I am glad your first impressions of the place were favourable. I hope with further acquaintance you will continue to like the place. Even though the days are warm, the cool nights and the trees and birds must make a difference. Raja also I hope will improve in those quiet sylvan surroundings.

A few days ago, on April 2nd, was *Ram Naumi*, the second anniversary of your marriage. Did you remember it? I thought of you and Feroze and of all the odd things that had happened since.

I think I wrote to you that I have received most of the things you sent me in the big parcel—the yarn, cutlery, *pashmina* shawl. Books take their time as they necessitate apparently a closer scrutiny. But the various books you have sent with this lot have not come yet.

I am glad to say that Fraser's book—*The Mountain Way*—has at last managed to reach me. Also the first copy of Guehenna's *Journal d'un homme de 40 ans*. I think I am going to like *The Mountain Way*. I should like you to write an acknowledgement to Fraser and to tell him how much I appreciate his gift. His address is: Rev. A. G. Fraser, Dial House, Chipstead, Surrey, England. He is the Fraser who used to be the principal of the Achimota College in the Gold Coast, West Africa. I met him in 1935 or 1936 and ever since then he sends me from time to time a book, usually of travel or arctic exploration or about the mountains.

Last week I wrote to you that I would not send you just yet my yarn as this might be a needless burden to you in Matheran. As is not unusual with me, I changed my mind soon after and packed up this yarn, together with other things, and sent them off. Having decided on doing something, the idea becomes a slight obsession with me and the sooner I do it, the better I feel.

So I have sent you to Matheran my yarn as well as your old cardigan and the new *pashmina* shawl. I found I had no use for this shawl here at this time of the year and I was afraid it might get spoilt by being kept in a box through the summer months. I was going to open it out and see it in a spread-out condition; but it was all stitched up & folded and I felt that removing these stitches could probably mess it up. So I left it as it was. Keep it and use it for yourself. It improves with use.

The two shells, which you want me to use as paper-weights, have also come. You seem to be almost as frivolous as I am. I doubt if anyone possessing the practical commonsense, which is considered such a virtue, and which weighs and measures everything, would have thought of sending anything so unnecessary. But then everything cannot be weighed and measured and many things escape the balance of practicality. I like the shells and they make a brave show. So far I have been using odd-shaped coloured stones, which I picked up here, as paper-weights. I wrote to you last year, did I not?, that there were all manner of fancy coloured stones here, small ones mostly. We picked up quite a number of them and I have a respectable collection, which does not include diamonds, rubies, emeralds and the like, but which is nonetheless attractive.

I have also returned to you those of the brown serviettes which have been pushed, together with the cardigan & shawl, into an old cushion cover. Also old periodicals.

The yarn that has been sent is in two bundles. The larger bundle contains the yarn I have spun here—70 hanks of 500 yards each, that is, total 35000 yards. Count 33 (Weight $1\frac{1}{2}$). This is quite enough for a sari. The smaller bundle contains 16 hanks of my old yarn=8000 yards. This is somewhat coarser and the average count is $26\frac{1}{2}$. I think it is better not to mix up the two as they are not of the same count or fineness.

I have kept the other yarn you sent me and shall try to get something made out of it here.

I was greatly interested to learn that Raja had rescued the old stone *murti* from the peepul tree. My mind went back to my early boyhood when this image was first dug out from somewhere in the grounds of Anand Bhawan. It must have been in 1900 or 1901. There was plenty of digging taking place all over the grounds, levelling them, making terraces, etc. I remember how excited I was when this image appeared. It was decided to place it in the fork of the old peepul and then I used to visit it daily. Later I went to England and forgot all about it. I do not remember seeing it again. And then it got covered and buried in a mixture of earth and dried peepul leaves till Raja rescued it from oblivion. And now it occupies a place of honour in his verandah. The story is almost symbolical of life and death and resurrection—the ceaseless round of nature and of life.

Will you tell Betty that instead of giving that very unfortunate picture of the Brussels Conference in her book if she had given another, it would have been more suitable. That other was a snapshot of a group containing six or seven persons, including Ernst Toller, Willie

Munzenburg, Betty & me. There were two or three others but I am not sure who they were. I had this picture but lost it. Then I saw it reproduced in one of Toller's later books which he sent me. That book too seems to have disappeared from our library. It might have been *I was a German* though I think it was another one but equally small. Toller's books ought to be traceable in Bombay and the picture will interest Betty.

The mention of Willie Munzenburg's name reminds me of his tragic end. He managed to escape from Germany by the very skin of his teeth within a few days of Hitler's advent to power in 1933. He was considered a particular *bete noire* by the Nazis and there was a regular hunt for him. He came to Paris and lived there among the German emigres for a couple of years, probably organizing anti-Hitler activities. It was a precarious life for the French Government of those days did not like this kind of thing. When I was in Paris in January 1936 I was having tea in a cafe, when to my great surprise, Munzenburg suddenly walked up to me. He had that secretive haunted look so peculiar to those who live more or less in hiding and are engaged in secret work. I saw him again in the same cafe—he would not come to my hotel. Some months later I heard that he had actually been kidnapped by the Nazis and taken across the border to Germany and shot or otherwise killed.

How many of these dramas and tragedies have taken place, and take place from day to day, under the seemingly unruffled surface of life. Like the ocean which seems so calm and peaceful and innocent, and then it opens its cavernous mouth and swallows up a ship, and again resumes its untroubled and innocent air.

Here is a well-known couplet by an unknown author:

قسمت تو دیکھیے کہ کہاں ٹوٹی ہے کمند
دو چار ہاتھ جبکہ لب بام رہ گیا

किस्मत तो देखिये के कहां टूटी है कमंद ।
दो चार हाथ जब के लबे बाम रह गया ॥⁴⁸¹

कमंद=rope-ladder; लब=lip; बाम=roof or कोठा.

481. Qaim Chandpuri: Look, what luck I have :
The scaling-ladder has given way
When (her) house-top is left to reach
By an arm's length or so!

The idea is of a lover going to his beloved by means of a rope-ladder.
Love

Your loving
Papu

I have just received your letter of April 3rd. The incense sticks have also come. I shall write about *Glimpses* etc., next week. Let me know definitely about your address for letters.

11.4.44.

Darling Betty,

You asked me about the possible educational arrangements for Harsha and Ajit and I told you something about the Doon School. After writing that I felt all the more how difficult it is to advise on the subject of children's education. So much depends on the child, so much on the objectives that the parents may have in view. I do not mean a difficult objective, like a profession or a job in life, but rather the general approach to life, the philosophy of life, if you like to call it so. Most of us, I suppose, are hardly conscious of having such a definite philosophy and would find it hard enough to describe it. Yet, consciously or unconsciously, we hold to a certain framework and function within it, and sometimes we rebel, but even so our little rebellion is within that general framework. Normally each individual's attitude to life is that of his social group or the more intimate circle in which he or she moves. That lays down the standard to be aimed at with minor varieties. When there is revolutionary change in the air, we are affected by it, we talk of it, and yet that talk has little reality behind it, and we find it difficult to pull ourselves out of accustomed ways of life and thought. Sometimes we are compelled to do so by circumstance and we submit, as we must, but unwillingly and rather ungraciously. We become then the slaves of circumstance rather than its masters or even its equals. To a large extent we are all such slaves of happenings which are beyond our individual control. Yet there is a difference.

Every parent wants his or her child to have all the virtues, all the good fortune. But we can seldom, if ever, have all of everything. We have to choose or to emphasize some aspects rather than others. There are what are loosely called the masculine virtues and those that are termed the feminine virtues. Both good and desirable and yet just slightly inconsistent with each other. In India, the feminine virtues seem to be more obvious today at any rate, though of course the masculine virtues are present also. Our outlook seems to favour the former.

Then again much depends on the period we are living in. In a more or less static period, certain virtues and accomplishments are more useful. In a rapidly changing period, other virtues and capacities assume importance. But whatever the period, self-reliance, fitness of body and keenness of mind and a harmony between the two, and a certain basic sense of values are always desirable. If this foundation is provided to the growing child much has already been done.

I hope Raja profited by his brief stay in Matheran. Distressing as asthma is, fortunately one recovers quickly from an attack if conditions are favourable.

I was happy to read what Dr. Lin had written about your book. His tribute is certainly worth having. I hope Walsh agrees to publish your book.

Love to you and Raja and the children.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

I was glad to learn from Indu that Raja has rescued the old stone image from the peepul tree in Anand Bhawan and brought it to Bombay.

April 12—Wednesday

Letters from Nan (Bombay) & Indu (Matheran).

Nan's letter astonished me. It appears that Pratap does not want Nan to inherit even the personal assets left by Ranjit—the argument being that all these came out of ancestral money. I was both irritated and amused. How money darkens the mind.

April 15, 1944

Darling Indu,

The last week has brought quite an unusual number of letters from you. I mentioned one in a footnote to my last letter. This was dated 3rd April. This was followed by a previous letter of yours dated 31st March, and then came two more, dated 6th and 9th April. Quite a feast.

The packet of books you sent long ago, containing a number of French ones, has not yet come, though there is a rumour that it is on the way. It seems to me that French is not a language with which the Bombay Secretariat is conversant, and hence the delay in passing these books.

Your letters have produced a slight confusion in my mind about your programme—Matheran, Juhu, Mahabaleshwar seem all mixed up together. How long you stay at Matheran, where you go from there—is all vague and uncertain. You write that Raja and Betty, tired of the seclusion and quiet of Matheran, were thinking of going back to Bombay. Presumably you stayed on. Not that it matters much whether I know your exact programme or not, except that I want to address my letters correctly. I do not want them to go astray.

Ahmadnagar is climatically not at all a bad place. Probably it is a cross between Poona and Matheran, though there is a lack of trees and foliage here, at any rate where we are kept. It is not as cold as I would like it to be in winter. The summer is not very hot and the rains are Poona-like, gentle showers as a rule. It is very dry and some people have trouble with their skin because of this dryness.

I am concerned to know that Madan has lost so much weight and has taken to fainting. I do not think you mentioned this fact previously. Send my love to him if & when you write.

The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* has started coming directly to me now. I suppose *The Hindu* will follow soon.

A copy of the *Reader's Digest* (for October 1943) has reached me. Some months back two other numbers came and curiously they had been addressed to me from America C/o the Govt. of Bombay.

Two days ago I received a set of rather lovely picture cards—hand-painted they seem to be—of Californian scenes. I do not know who sent them and whether they came through you. I have previously received a book and a magazine sent by someone in Los Angeles, California. Perhaps the same person sent these also. I do not know who he or she is. If there were any covering letters, they must have been kept back by the Bombay Secretariat.

Did you receive Wendell Willkie's *One World* which I sent you more than six weeks ago?

The extraordinary weather in Allahabad and in various other parts of the U.P. appears to have done a great deal of damage to the crops and wheat is 2 seers to the rupee. How the unhappy poor manage to carry on under these conditions I am wholly unable to make out.

About my publications:

1. Marathi translation of *Glimpses*: As I appear to have already

given permission for this to the Ratnakar Publications, Sangli, you have done well to write to them to find out what has happened. It is nearly three years now since permission was given and if the translation has not already come out, my permission lapses. I would prefer the Sulabha Rashtriya Granthmala of Poona to take it up. The book is a big one and requires some financial resources. Also it is better to deal with one publisher in one language. But find out so that there may be no overlapping & consequent confusion. And in case this new permission is given to the Poona people, the Ratnakar Publications should be clearly informed of it.

2. Assamese translation of *Letters*: If you find that the person who took permission in May 1939 has not issued the translation yet, he must be informed that the permission has lapsed, and is being given to another person. In giving permission for *Letters* it should always be mentioned that I reserve the right to present the copyright for that language to any university or Provincial Education Department, should they ask for it. If the latter book is prescribed for schools I want to make no money out of it and should like the children to have it at a rock-bottom price. But of course if private publishers bring them out there is no reason why I should not charge royalty which should be 10% of the published price of books actually sold.

3. This reminds me that six or seven years ago I transferred my copyright in the Urdu & Hindi translations of the *Letters* to the U.P. Govt.'s Educational Department. These books have since been widely used in the U.P. schools. The Department, at my instance, priced them low. I think the price was four annas or so. Even so the then Director of Public Instruction, U.P., said there might be a profit. I suggested to him that this money might be given as scholarships to poor students and he agreed. (I think I also suggested that these might be called the 'Kamala Scholarships' but I am not sure.) You will find a note about this in the book. I do not know what has happened since then. It might be worthwhile to write to the Director of Public Instruction, U.P., to inquire if any scholarships were actually given.

4. I gave the copyright for the Bengali translation of *Letters* to Santiniketan. They might be asked what they did with it. Have they brought out an edition?

5. Request from U. Srinivaskini, Mulki, S. Kanara, for including 1st chapter of *Letters* in a book of selections. I have often given such permission and so this may also be given. Usually there is a token payment of a small sum. I do not want to make this a condition but you might suggest that a token payment might be made by him

to the Kasturba Memorial Fund. No reference in this or any other like matter is necessary to the A.L.J. Press.

6. M. Krishna Pillai, Jagathy, Trivandrum. He does not appear at all satisfactory. Besides I can't give permission to anyone to mangle my book and leave out parts.

That is the lot I think.

When you are in Bombay, you might buy some cutlery &c. to replenish our stock, provided these are available.

It was rather foolish of me to write at length offering my advice about Harsha's & Ajit's education. But I have an inveterate habit of giving advice. I wish I could cure myself of it. My own conceptions of men and things are not the usual ones and so my advice seldom fits in.

In your childhood I suppose you were a little more self-reliant than children of your age in India. The credit for that should at least partly go to your parents. I remember when you started going to the Ecole International in Geneva. You were about 8½ years old then. I accompanied you to school, came back, went again to fetch you for lunch, again took you to school, came back, & finally went at four to bring you back. I seemed to spend the whole day in moving backwards & forwards between our pension and your school. After a few days I decided to let you go by yourself. It was a slightly tricky journey as it involved a change of trams. I spoke to the tram conductor, who had come to recognize you and who promised to look after you. I do not think Mummy was overpleased at this arrangement. However it worked. The tram journey was really more complicated than a railway journey. Later we moved to our flat in the Boulevard des Tranches. From there you used to walk to your school, which was about a quarter of a mile away.

I do not think you travelled all by yourself from Bex to Paris. As far as I can remember, I went to Bex from Berlin direct to fetch you, leaving Mummy & *chhoti Puphi* in Berlin. They travelled by themselves subsequently to Paris. *Dadu* had gone previously. But I am rather vague about all this. Anyway you did travel by yourself by train in Switzerland.

I feel snubbed, I withdraw. I shall not in future display my 'generosity' towards you, or mention such things as accounts or money. I shall accustom myself to think of you as the strong and self-reliant one, fully capable of looking after yourself in any circumstances. And so on and so forth.

But really I did not doubt that and I would hate to think of you as anything but self-reliant. My suggestion that you might draw upon

my account was not a reflection on your capacity. This was not a new suggestion. I think I have made it several times and I made it clear previous to my arrest. We live in abnormal times and we must adapt ourselves to them as best we may. I had no particular compunction in drawing upon my father's account when I particularly needed money. Is it because you have got married that you have risen or changed in status? Of course, there is a change in your life in many ways but I have failed to sense any change in my relation to you.

But seriously, I do not mind what you have written. I rather like it and it amuses me also. My views on money are odd and I am continually surprised at the importance people attach to money. You will remember that about 7 years ago Princess Aristarchi suddenly asked me for a loan of £ 300. I hardly knew her, except that she had been rather decent to Mummy. As it happened I had just then received just this sum as royalty on my *Autobiography* (296 in the pound from the liquidation of John Lane.) The money was there and I sent it immediately. Of course it has never come back although I could welcome this tidy little sum. I am soft in the head I suppose. I shall continue to spend in this way and it is far more likely that I might seek your help than that you should need mine. But whenever you need money, do not be stupid—Draw upon my account.

This is my letter No. 57.

Love

Your loving
Papu

A bundle of foreign papers has just come.

April 22, 1944

Darling Indu,

I have your letter of April 13th. Probably you are in Mahabaleshwar now but this letter is being sent to Sakina Mansion. Mahabaleshwar ought to be much cooler than Matheran. Here the temperature has gone up to 107° F and I realized that my comparison of Ahmadnagar with Poona was not quite correct.

All the books you sent, including the French ones, have now arrived, except one: *Warning to the West*.⁴⁸² I suppose this is by Shridharani. Probably it has been kept back as not suitable for my morals.

I wonder if you can find at a chemist's a tube of Dr. Bengue's Balsam. Probably you will not find it at Mahabaleshwar—But I know that there are 3 or 4 tubes of it in my bathroom in Anand Bhawan—on the shelves. Svetoslav Roerich sent me a number of tubes for my arms. Since then I have sometimes used one of them. It is now exhausted as others use it also. You might write to Feroze to get hold of these and send me two tubes. I do not know where Feroze is but I suppose he visits Allahabad frequently. There is no hurry about it. The Balsam is more needed by others than by me. It is a useful thing to keep.

We had an odd experience two days ago. Some eggs come for us every morning and are put away in a tin box. About midday the top of this box was pushed out and it was discovered that a tiny chick had emerged from one of the eggs! It has survived and is growing.

That again brings us another problem—Life is a pretty complicated affair. The chick requires constant attention and protection from the cat Chando Bibi and her kitten which has grown frolicsome. I think we shall have to send the chick away. The kitten is still nameless—Can you suggest a name? Or better still ask Bebee who is the great authority on cats. The name should not be a royal or aristocratic one for our poor kitten belongs to the proletariat. It is a male kitten.

The cat Chando is evidently confused and distressed by the variety of languages in which she is addressed. Maulana finds it most convenient to speak to her in Persian. Marathi of course is usual and being an Ahmadnagar cat we have presumed that she understands the elements of Marathi.

I find from the papers that the Soviet Union News of Delhi has issued a Russian primer called: *Russian Primer with a Dictionary of About 1200 Words* (all this is the title! Evidently a Russian compilation) by Vladimir Shibayev (Rs. 3/2/-). I should like to have a copy of this if you can manage to get it. Do not imagine that I am going to begin learning Russian. Nothing of the kind. But I understand that the book contains a comparison of Russian with Sanskrit, giving many common root words &c. This interests me.

482. The author, Krishnalal Shridharani, contends that the second World War may deteriorate into "a titanic inter-continental struggle between East and West or in a global racial conflict between Whites and non-Whites." To avert this he calls for a change in western thinking on eastern problems.

Yesterday, as a particular favour I suppose, I was given a brief note addressed to me by Bijju *chacha*. But only after due enquiry about our relationship. The note contained the information that Ballo was being married at Delhi on May 1st. He asked me, if it was possible, to send my blessings by telegram. This would not only be greatly appreciated but be of 'great spiritual value'. I do not know what spiritual value my good wishes might possess but certainly Ballo and his bride will have them in good measure. I do not propose to attempt to send a telegram as this cannot be done from here. At the most the 'telegram' is sent by post to the Bombay Secretariat and then, if it is passed and the stars and omens are favourable, and there is no obvious reason or rule why it should not be kept back, it might be forwarded by telegram. This is far too complicated and doubtful a process. But on receipt of this letter you might send a telegram to Ballo to Delhi, conveying my love and blessing to him and his bride.

Also write a letter to Bijju *chacha*. Tell him I am happy to know of Ballo's marriage. Indeed I sent my good wishes, you will remember, some months ago when I thought that the wedding would come off in February. It is many years since I saw Ballo—five and a half to be accurate. That was when he came to our flat in St. James' Street in London in 1938. He was big and well-built then. I am told that he has grown since then and is a fine specimen of a young man now. I heard of his return from England in an odd way. On my way to Kulu two years ago I spent a couple of days in Delhi, staying with Ratan and Rajan. One morning, without previous notice, a motor bicycle rolled in and a very youthful and tall English officer tramped in and inquired for me. He was shown in and in a typical haw-haw manner he informed me that he had just flown over from England, that he was a product of Harrow, and that he had been commissioned by Lady Willingdon to convey her love to me! This tender and thoughtful message came as a surprise. Further he told me that a young relative of mine had been his companion during the air journey. From his description I gathered that this was Ballo.

Tell Bijju *chacha* also that I am continuing my *asans*, though sometimes I leave off either because the mood does not fit in or, more usually, because some slight sprain or something similar gives a backache—nothing much but enough to stop the *asans* for some days.

Inform him also that Asaf Ali sends his love and good wishes to Ballo.

I am sending you—to Sakina Mansion—a packet of old foreign periodicals. I liked the tiny services edition of *Time* that you sent me. How enterprising the Americans are, but then their resources are

prodigious. It is much easier to be enterprising, adventurous and frolicsome with the assurance of these resources.

The American cartoon that Fraser sent has also come. It is good.

I am afraid Indian publishers are very unbusinesslike, to put it mildly. If you like you can write to the publishers of translations of my books in India asking them for a report of what has been done so far, royalties &c. Just inquire. More you cannot do, nor is there any need to consult anybody. For aught I know some of these translators or publishers might also be in prison. Many of these translations circulate in fairly small areas and do not yield much in the way of royalties. The best sellers are the Hindi editions, published by the Sasta Sahitya Mandal of Delhi (and I must say that they have been fairly regular in their accounts & payments). You might write to them.

The Tamil edition of my *Autobiography*, to my misfortune, was handled by a person, once a reputable publisher, who developed into a strange mixture of a knave and a lunatic, and in addition became a bankrupt! It is no good writing to him.

The Gujrati edition of my *Auto*, issued by the Navajivan Press, does not owe me any royalties as they do business on a curious non-profit-making basis. I disapprove of this but still I agreed to it. Mahadeva Desai was the translator and he did his job well. You need not write to these people either.

The Bengali and Marathi translations of the *Autobiography* have produced some royalties which have been sent to me from time to time—nothing much. It is possible that I have forgotten to make some entries in my book.

The Urdu edition of the *Auto* was issued by the Jamia Millia of Delhi—a very honest, capable, hardworking lot of men but totally unversed in any business. I donated the royalties of the first edition to the Jamia. I do not know whether they have issued a second edition or not. It is called *Meri Kahani*.

I should like you to find out from the Jamia Millia about the Urdu *Glimpses of World History*. I know they issued one book containing about a quarter or a third of *Glimpses*. Have they followed this up by issuing further parts?

There is one other inquiry which is worth making. Some years ago I gave permission to a firm in Tel Aviv (Palestine) to issue a Hebrew translation of the *Auto*. (You will find this mentioned in my notebook.)

I wonder if they took advantage of this. Probably not, as war developments might have come in the way.

Love

Your loving
Papu

I have just had a letter from Chand & Tara from Wellesley dated 29th January.

Chand mentions a book about which I had previously read. Get it when you can. This is Agnes Smedley's⁴⁸³ *The Battle Hymn of China*.⁴⁸⁴

Chand says she & Tara saw a movie in Chicago which had been taken at the conference in Paris in July 1938. You and I were in it and Krishna Menon, Ellen Wilkinson & Louis Fischer.

Have you heard from Krishna Menon?

P

April 23 Sunday—

On April 13th—*Vaisakhi* & Jallianwala Day—I began writing the proposed book—*The Discovery of India*. For 8 or 9 days I was absorbed in it. The first chapter dealing with various general questions—beliefs &c.—was hard writing and yet it came out in a spurt. I have finished 2 chapters—59 pages of foolscap manuscript. The old Dehra Dun MSS. helped and I took out some paragraphs from it. All this has been a kind of preliminary to the introduction of the main theme—which is difficult. So for the last two days I have rested.

x x x x

No further news of Bapu's coming here. It seems to grow doubtful.

x x x x

483. Agnes Smedley (d. 1950); *alias* Alice Bird *alias* Mrs. Petroikos, daughter of a US worker, married for a time to Virendranath Chattopadhyaya, was associated with Indian revolutionaries in Berlin; later a sympathiser with the Chinese Communist movement; her works include, *India and the Next War* and *Chinese Destinies*.

484. In this book Agnes Smedley portrays her personal experiences in China, where she worked as a volunteer Red Cross worker for 13 years from 1928

Some days ago Pantji again raised the question of our taking some action in regard to the Japanese invasion of Assam—the action suggested being a brief message for the people sent to & through the Viceroy. I was agreeable but doubtful of the reaction of Vallabhbhai & some others. Maulana, I thought, would approve of the proposal. It was better therefore to tackle Vallabhbhai first. So I suggested to Pantji to have a talk with Vallabhbhai. He had such a talk—so did I later. As I expected Vallabhbhai did not take kindly to it. Yet he did not find it very easy to resist it.

Just about then Maulana, not knowing about these talks, spoke to me and said that something should be done. What he suggested had some resemblance to his November proposal.⁴⁸⁵ I did not like it. To my surprise he did not approve of Pantji's proposal. Pant also had a talk with him—As neither Maulana nor Vallabhbhai approved, the proposal was dropped, for the time being at least.

Mahmud then spoke to me & yesterday he went to Maulana. Later Maulana reverted to the subject in his conversation with me and seemed partly reconciled to our old proposal—though his dislike for it continued. There the matter stands now. Perhaps there may be some developments.

x

x

x

x

April 25, Tuesday

Soon after writing my last note I found out that there was again talk of Bapu and party coming here. Nothing definite said but rooms being inspected again & again by military officers and Sendak suddenly summoned to Bombay.

Most of my companions are certain that he is being sent here soon—probably within a week or ten days—I suppose it is likely but I do not want to feel sure till there is more positive evidence.

I shall be glad if Bapu comes here—for many reasons. For an entirely minor and trivial reason I am a little disturbed! Since I have begun my writing business I have been more & more absorbed in it and I would not like it to be stopped by any happening. The possibility of Bapu coming has made me work all the harder—about 5 hours a day. I am making good progress, with the help of my previous notes &c.

485. See *ante*, p. 276.

Today I finished 92 pages but this includes chunks from the old D.D.J. MSS. The rate of progress will slow down later.

Still, with luck, I ought to reach the end of my writing by the end of July. I hope I shall be able to finish it here for once I go out, there will be no peace or chance for writing.

The book ought not to be bad, and it should serve a useful purpose. I wish, however, that I had begun it earlier and written at leisure. Now somehow I have got a feeling that I must hurry. Why I have that feeling—I do not know.

x x x x

Poor Shiva Prasad Gupta is dead—died yesterday morning at Benares. Not surprising for he has so long been at death's door. Still it is very sad for old friends to drop out. What a lovable person he was—intensely good and straight in his way, which was often a foolish way.

x x x x

I had letters from Chand & Tara from Wellesley two or three days ago—I shall write to them tomorrow.

April 29, 1944

Darling Indu,

I have your letter of April 18/20 from Bombay. The explosion⁴⁸⁶ in Bombay was indeed a terrible affair and a vivid reminder of the kind of thing that happens suddenly and upsets thousands of lives. That gives some faint idea of happenings elsewhere when this sort of thing is done deliberately and on a vast scale.

I am surprised to learn that you have not so far received Salim Ali's *Book on Indian Birds*. I sent this on March 24th to Sakina Mansion. It was sent by itself and I took particular care to put it in a cardboard book cover which had come to me with some book from America. You might inquire about it from the Bombay Secretariat. Then, later, on April 1st I sent a packet of books to you to Rugby Hotel, Matheran. This contained Tod's *Rajasthan*, 3 volumes & some other books, a list of which I gave in a previous letter.

486. On 14 April 1944, fire broke out in a ship in the Bombay harbour and caused two explosions in which 500 people were killed and 2000 injured.

I have not received *A Week with Gandhi*.⁴⁸⁷ Nor have I received *Warning to the West*. Apart from these two books I have received all the books you have so far mentioned, except the last packet, containing *Loom of Language*,⁴⁸⁸ *Mother Russia*⁴⁸⁹ &c, which you were going to send. I think you might ask the Bombay Secretariat people to return to you any books meant for me which are held back for any reason.

For the present I am crowded with books and I am not reading any. A fortnight ago I started writing and since then this has filled my mind and my time. Even when I am not actually writing I am thinking about it—it becomes an obsession. So no reading till I work off this obsession. Probably in another few weeks I shall get tired of writing and go back to reading for a while. Meanwhile, my reading is confined to foreign magazines &c., which you sent. Even these have piled up. Yesterday I received a fat packet containing *Foreign Affairs Quarterly*, *Asia*, *Pacific Affairs*, *Reader's Digest* and a large number of other reviews & magazines.

Books take a lot of looking after. I did not realize previously that cockroaches and crickets were so fond of them. They crowd into my little bookcase and feed fast. In spite of periodical cleanings I cannot keep pace with them. This morning I discovered that the leather binding of a new book I had received direct from America less than a month ago was partly eaten up. I have spent the greater part of the morning in chasing these cockroaches. I dislike them greatly. One large beast managed to hide itself inside the *newar* of my bed, and so the *newar* had to be opened out to get at him.

I have noted what you have said about the supply of fruit. It will be welcome. I do not think we are likely to make special demands.

As for the Marathi translation of *Glimpses* I am sorry for Shah's⁴⁹⁰ troubles but it is clear that he has not got the resources to undertake and carry through such a work. It is a big book and requires both

487. The book contains an account of Louis Fischer's informal talks with Mahatma Gandhi at Sevagram in June 1942 and a chapter on the working of his mind. The author defends Mahatma Gandhi from the charge of being pro-Japanese and points out that as between independence and nonviolence, the former takes precedence in his thoughts.

488. Written by the eminent philologist Frederick Bodmer and edited by Lancelot Hogben, the author of *Mathematics for the Million*, it is a study of the origin, the growth and the use of communication between peoples.

489. By Maurice Hindus; the author was an American who for two decades had been visiting Soviet Russia and writing sympathetically about what he had seen. In this book he interprets Russia at war by portraying selected people and places.

490. Ratanlal D. Shah, printer and publisher, Ratnakar Press, Sangli.

capital and contacts with booksellers &c. It was absurd of him to issue 250 copies for sale, as he says he did. The book must be printed in a largish edition and advertised. Besides I think it is wrong for the translator to do his own publishing. Evidently the Ratnakar Publications in Sangli are doing business on a very small scale.

I do not remember receiving any letter or books from Shah in August 1941 or later. They may well have come for ought I know for I was in Dehra Jail then. But such letters were usually forwarded to me there. It seems clear that I was rather doubtful of Shah's capacity to undertake the work and hence my insistence on his bringing it out within a few months, as he promised to do. Even now he cannot use his press and says that he is negotiating with a Kolhapur firm. All this is very unsatisfactory and I am sure he cannot possibly do justice to the book.

Strictly speaking, such agreement as there might have been has long been washed out and there is no bar to my making another agreement with a different firm. I am concerned with a wide sale of the book, not with profits. This cannot be expected from Shah & the Ratnakar people. Therefore it is desirable to fix up with the Poona people who brought out my *Autobiography*.

I am sorry for Shah for he has had his own troubles. But allowing him to carry on with the book in sheer sympathy will do him little good and no good at all to the book. He simply can't manage it. I suppose he owes me some small sum for the books actually sold so far. This can be written off.

So I suggest that you try to get out of the Shah muddle and fix up with the Poona people. Tell the latter how matters stand. They can go ahead with the publication and there must be a time-limit. Shah must cancel his arrangements with the Kolhapur press. If the Poona people can take advantage in any way of what Shah has already done and pay him some relatively small sum for it, it would be fair. For instance, they can take his translation & compare it with their own, or in any other way. But this is not a thing which can be insisted upon.

Tell the Poona people that for purposes of translation the new edition issued in England (or U.S.A.) must be used, not the old inaccurate 2-volume edition issued by Kitabistan. They can use Horrabin's maps. For these maps I had told them, or sent a message, that they would have to pay a royalty to Horrabin, or rather a small lump sum. For the present this need not be considered and instead of this payment, it would be better for them to pay something to Shah. This payment is not to be considered as legally done but rather because of the loss suffered by Shah owing to untoward happenings.

I have indicated to you how you might proceed in the matter. These are just suggestions and you can adjust your action as you consider proper.

I read a curious news item in *The Leader* the other day. A girl aged 18 was appearing in some examination in Gorakhpur. Right in the middle of the examination, while she was answering her papers in the exam. hall, she felt labour pains. She carried on with her papers, then went home, gave birth to a baby, and returned the next day to the examination room for further papers!

I am getting the *Patrika* & *The Hindu* regularly, the former from Allahabad. In addition I am still getting the Calcutta edition of the *Patrika* via the Bombay Secretariat. This latter is wholly unnecessary and a waste of money & energy. Please write to the Calcutta Manager of the *Patrika* that while I appreciate his sending the paper, he need not continue sending it as I am getting the Allahabad edition direct.

I hope you are prospering at Mahabaleshwar. It is pretty hot here and from the papers it appears that Allahabad has got over its cool spell and has reverted to its normal heat.

Love

Your loving
Papu

May 5, Friday

Bapu has been ill with malaria for some days. The fever has gone but weakness continues—low blood pressure &c. Even Govt. communique says there is cause for anxiety. Bidhan has seen him.

For the first few days I did not attach much importance to the news of his having malarial fever—He has still abundant vitality. But then worse news. And he is 75½. The past two years—what he must have gone through with all the burdens he carries! Mahadeva's death—Ba's death—but above all the condition of India.

The Times of India suggests his release on medical grounds. That shows his condition must be pretty bad—also that Govt. is considering this release.

x x x x

A tragedy occurred tonight. Chando the cat made a dash at some food—the cook waved an iron hatchet or something he had in his

hand and inadvertently hit Chando on the head. There was no regular cut but the head was bashed in one place and concussion of the brain took place. The poor thing was in a state of semi-coma. We washed the wound &c.—She may survive but the chances are very slight. This has depressed us all greatly. The most unhappy person is the cook who hit her.

May 6, Saturday

News that Gandhiji released unconditionally owing to growing weakness came by radio this morning and the Supt. communicated it to us.⁴⁹¹ His condition must be pretty bad. Still release may do him good and just pull him through.

Anyway—a period ends—this long course which has lasted nearly two years. New developments whatever happens.

x x x x

Chando still alive—just carrying on—

May 6, 1944

Darling Indu,

I have your letter of April 26 from Mahabaleshwar. I hope the cooler weather there will suit you and keep you fit. It is getting hot and close here. Another month of this before the rains come. How long do you propose to remain at Mahabaleshwar? I suppose you will go down when the monsoon starts in earnest. I want to return some books to you—Shall I send them to Bombay or Mahabaleshwar?

I have received the following books from you:

- 1 *Story of Confucius*: Carl Crow
- 2 *Edith Sitwell: A Poet's Notebook*
- 3 *Poetry in Wartime*: Edited by Tambimuttu
- 4 *The Loom of Language*: F. Bodmer

491. On 5 May 1944, the Government announced that "in view of the medical reports on Mr. Gandhi's health, the Government of India have decided to release him unconditionally" and that "the decision taken solely on medical grounds" would be effective from 6 May.

- 5 Tagore: *Poems*
- 6 Reginald Reynolds: *Cleanliness & Godliness*
- 7 *A Book of Russian Verse*—Ed. by C.M. Bowra
- 8 Maurice Hindus: *Mother Russia*
- 9 Ilya Ehrenburg: *Russia at War*
- 10 Edward Thompson: *The Making of the Indian Princes*
- 11 *Sophocles' King Oedipus* by W.B. Yeats

Thus I have received all the books you have sent me in the last two lots except one, namely, Kate Mitchell's *India*.⁴⁹² Presumably this book as well as, Shridharani's *Warning to the West* & Fischer's *A Week with Gandhi* have been kept back by the censor. Please get them back from him and keep them.

It would be a pity if any of our books got lost in this way. So it is desirable to keep track of them. In my letters I mention all the books I receive and all those I send back and I keep a full record of all this with me for reference.

I hope you have managed to trace Salim Ali's *Book on Indian Birds* sent by me, all by itself, on March 24, to Bombay. Wendell Willkie's *One World* was sent on February 26 to Allahabad together with 4 copies of *Life* and one or two other foreign periodicals.

I have also received, presumably from *Puphi* (Nan), Ranjit's translation of the *Mudrarakshasa* & 2 books by Nilima.⁴⁹³

Among the books you have sent me is Thompson's *Making of the Indian Princes*. As a matter of fact I had already received this book from Thompson himself last December. He sent this & two other of his books through the Viceroy or the Govt. of India. I wrote to you about this at the time and asked you to acknowledge them & thank Thompson for them. So the purchase of another copy was unnecessary, (and it costs Rs. 17/8!), but not quite unnecessary as I have made a present of it to Maulana, who is greatly interested in the subject.

Another book sent by you that I already had is Maurice Hindus' *Mother Russia*. Some one had sent it to me from Allahabad—some bookseller I think. I shall return the extra copy to you with my next lot of books.

I am now very well provided with books—enough to last me many months even if I gave much time to them. But as a matter of fact, as I wrote to you, I am more concerned with writing now.

492. *India—an American View* by Kate L. Mitchell. The author sees India against the needs of the Allies and presents Indian politics in terms of a struggle of contending forces for power. She condemns Mahatma Gandhi's policies as political manoeuvres and stresses the importance of the left forces in India.

493. Nilima Devi (b. 1903); writer and publisher.

I have already written to you fully about the Marathi translation of *Glimpses*. The Ratnakar, Sangli, arrangement must be definitely ended and the Poona people given authority. I made some rather vague suggestions for giving compensation to the Ratnakar people *ex gratia* but I do not quite see how these can be worked out. None of them should be made a condition and it is better not to give hopes to the Ratnakar people, except in so far as any royalties to me may be due. These latter can be written off.

I understand that the Poona people are revising their Marathi translation and they suggest a rather big price for their publication as the cost is going to be heavy. This is true but a big price is bad business and limits the market greatly. I am interested in a large number of people reading the book. It would be better to issue the book in parts—say four—and price them relatively low. This will also speed up publication.

2. As for the inclusion of the 1st chapter of *Letters* in a selection, I have no objection. This kind of thing has been frequently done. It means only 3 or 4 pages and one cannot change much. Still a token payment should be made—I had suggested that some such payment might be made to the Kasturba Memorial Fund.

3. Chitnis⁴⁹⁴ of Kolhapur should be asked to give a list of the 'articles & utterances' he wants to publish. If I am satisfied that this will be competently done by a reliable firm of publishers, I shall have no objection. This kind of thing does not overlap with regular books. Royalty 10% on actual sales.

There was a tragedy here last evening of which the victim was our cat Chando. Evidently she was attracted by some food and the cook waved an iron instrument which he had in his hand. Almost inadvertently he hit her full on the head, producing concussion of the brain. The poor thing collapsed and has remained since in a state of semi-coma. We are giving her every attention and there is just a chance that she may survive. But not much. This unfortunate occurrence has depressed all of us as we had got used to Chando and were fond of her. Even those who disliked cats were sorry, and sorriest of all was the man who had hit her.

Letters addressed to us are now handed to us without envelopes and covers—a graceless and crude procedure. If economy is intended why not send them in their original envelopes? A letter without an envelope is like a person without clothes. In private, yes. But this public undressing and nakedness and the flaunting of it before everybody is a

494. S.L. Chitnis translated into Marathi the *Glimpses of World History*.

little painful. There is also a greater chance of the letters getting mixed up or going astray. It is safer always to write the names of the sender and the addressee on the letter itself.

Do you ever hear from Krishna Menon?

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 60.

May 13, 1944

Darling Indu,

I do not quite know where to write to you for your last brief letter of May 7th informed me that you were going to Poona to see Bapu. Yet, I suppose, you must have gone back to Mahabaleshwar, and so my letter goes there. You have an advantage over me. You know always where to address your letters to me. I am not one of those flighty, unstable restless individuals who move about frequently. I am a fixture—in Ahmadnagar Fort!

Bapu's release and his illness have naturally upset the still and rather stagnant waters of Indian life and there is a stir and an excitement and a going to and fro. Yet I wish our people would restrain their desire for *darshan* &c. We are a terribly inconsiderate people where illness is concerned—or rather 'inconsiderate' is not the right word. We overwhelm the person who is ill with too much consideration. I think one of Bapu's chief troubles has been this and he is seldom allowed privacy or rest. Crowds gather and gape and gaze at him imagining that they are not interfering in any way. The worst offenders are those whom he encourages himself by his affection and personal interest. He has built up such a vast family and given a bit of himself to so many that each one of them considers it a right and duty to hover round him.

Normally I would not worry about his health for he has considerable powers of recuperation. But it is his age that troubles me. He is nearly 75, a good age for India, an age which I certainly do not expect to reach. For some years past I have noticed the obvious effects of advancing age on his physical frame. What the last twenty-one months have done to him I do not know, but I can make a guess. I hope, therefore, that he will be strong enough to take absolute rest till he is fully recovered and that others will help him to do so.

If you see *Puphi* (Nan) tell her that I sent her a letter to Allahabad a week ago. But she must have missed it as she went off to Poona. I hope it reaches her. Also tell her that I have received the copies of Chand's & Tara's letters to her, which she sent me.

The fruit arrangement which you and Mridula made is working satisfactorily and almost for the first time, since we came here, we are having some decent fruit.

I wrote to you last week about our cat Chando. For three days we watched her. That she survived at all was surprising and satisfactory but she continued in a state of half-coma, taking no food. Then she was sent to a local veterinary hospital. She is still there but we have been told that she is recovering and there is no danger now— Which is good.

After some very hot days we have had a fall in temperature due to occasional drizzles.

Chand, in one of her letters to her mother, suggests that it would be desirable to have a new and abridged edition of my *Auto* published in America. There is something in this. The best person to judge of it is Walsh, my publisher. If he feels that something of this kind is desirable and worthwhile I shall have no objection. Normally I would not agree to leave this in anyone's hands but I trust Walsh's judgment and am prepared to leave the matter to him entirely. He can do what he thinks right. You might inform him of this.

This is my letter No. 61.

Love

Your loving
Papu

13.5.44

Darling Betty,

It is just a month since I wrote to you and six weeks since I had a letter from you. But some news of you has come to me through Indu.

You must have had your hands full. The fire in Bombay was enough to shake everyone up there and to demand his or her service in relief work. The relief work, I suppose, will continue for a considerable time.

Now Bapu's release has inevitably produced a new stir and excitement, especially for those in Bombay. I hope he will be left in peace for some time to enable him to have rest and recover.

I saw in some newspapers that your book is going to be published in America. Has this been fixed up?

How is Raja? I hope Matheran did him good.

Love,

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

May 15 Monday.

Chando died last night in the veterinary hospital. She was sent there on the 7th evening and we were informed that she was progressing. Indeed it was settled that she would be discharged from the hospital on Sunday—yesterday—and could come back to us. Instead she died. It is rather sad and some of us miss her.

May 20, 1944

Darling Indu,

I have received two letters from you—one dated 8th May from Poona and the other dated 14th May from Mahabaleshwar.

You suggest that I might return the books to you to Mahabaleshwar. This will mean needless trouble to you as you will have to cart them about from place to place. So for the present I am not sending them, except for 3 copies of *Life*. I think I shall send the books later to your Bombay address.

I do not quite see how you can stay in Juhu after June 8th. The monsoon is certain to begin by that date and Juhu is not a suitable place during the monsoon.

Do not trouble about the *Russian Primer*. I have seen a copy of it and that is all I wanted to do.

Wendell Willkie's *One World* was sent to you to Allahabad on Feb. 26th together with some copies of *Life*. The size and shape of the book is rather like *Life*, only somewhat smaller. So it is just possible to overlook it or for it to get mixed up with the periodicals.

Fruit is coming here regularly. Some good honey will be welcome. Mahabaleshwar honey is well-known. Psyche sent me several bottles of

it—triple-strained it was called—last year. I think I wrote to you that one of these bottles broke *en route* and made a terrible mess.

I am sorry to tell you that Chand Bibi died on Sunday last. We were expecting her back from the veterinary hospital that very day as we had been told that she was doing well. She was not sent and next day we were told that she was dead.

About Khaliq I quite understand that he is not particularly useful just at present and has little work to do. Nevertheless I dislike intensely parting from him. Personally I do not understand how people manage to exist on these small salaries in these days of terribly high prices. Khaliq has been with us for 25 years or so, with a little gap in between. He came as a young boy and has grown up in our service. I cannot consider his case or that of any other servant merely from the point of view of our needing him or not at present or just as a cold-blooded business proposition. We owe a certain duty to those who have so long served us faithfully. Besides we may need him later or someone in his place, and a newcomer is seldom satisfactory. It takes time to get used to him. Wages, especially the wages of more or less skilled workers, have gone up greatly because of the war and partly because of the high rates introduced by Americans in India. We cannot keep up with these American standards but we cannot help being influenced by them. I understand Ladli Bhai's point of view but it is too out of date to fit in with modern conditions. It is quite likely that if Khaliq's salary is increased, others, especially Tulsi, will want more. I do not think we need be frightened of this. After all we have not got too many servants. It is better to have a few well-paid ones than a crowd.

I think therefore that Khaliq's pay should certainly be increased by 3/- a month. That will make it 30/- pay plus 2/- allowance, making 32/- in all. He has got a wife and daughter and possibly others to look after. After all, we spend a few rupees constantly on odd purchases—a book &c.—without a second's hesitation. And yet this small sum might make a great deal of difference to a family. I am interested in Khaliq's daughter and I think I once wrote to you to give some help to her or for her occasionally—I hope her education has been continued. Normally, our servants get tips etc., old and new clothes, from time to time. But when the house is seldom used and no guests come, or come rarely, these tips cease.

Apart from the increase of Rs. 3/- in Khaliq's salary, I think you might tell him that I should like to help his daughter's education &c. and, if need arises, he can ask you or Feroze for such help. Feroze,

when he is in Allahabad, can give Khaliq Rs. 10 or Rs. 15 as a small lump sum for this purpose on my behalf.

Could you send me a full list of Anand Bhawan servants with their salaries and allowances? I want to go over this and know exactly how matters stand.

Is Upadhyaya still in prison? Quite a number of people have been discharged in the U.P. and yet Upadhyaya, of all persons, still apparently continues.

Have you any news of Madan Bhai? Did Feroze succeed in getting an interview with him?

You must know of the complications that *Puphi* (Nan) is having to face—legal and testamentary. These have evidently upset her a lot and she is greatly worried. I can understand that for such troubles are not only irritating in themselves but the possible consequences affect our future lives. No one views with equanimity the idea of changing the course of his or her life. This present affair is an eloquent commentary on the state not only of our laws but, what is more important, the state of people's minds here. The difference between a son and a daughter, not to mention the wife, is tremendous. If Ranjit had a son, this son would have inherited a very considerable property running into several lakhs. Daughters are cut out completely from the joint fund, and even as regards the much smaller sum, which was treated more or less as separate property by Ranjit, there is now a dispute. If Pratap Pandit's view is correct and is upheld then the daughters get 300/- each per annum and the widow Rs. 500/- per annum, that is Rs. 25/- per month & about 42/- per month. For the rest they are supposed to depend on Pratap's charity, which is not exactly resplendent.

Just because Ranjit was careless about making a will, full advantage is sought to be taken of a strict interpretation of the law—a pound of flesh business. What exactly the law is in this particular case I am not competent to judge.

So I can understand that Nan is worried. There is the question of supplying Chand & Tara with funds for carrying on their education. And so many other things. Nevertheless I do not think it is worthwhile worrying. For my part I do not propose to spend a single sleepless night over this matter. I am annoyed at Pratap's attitude but it is a passing irritation. Curiously enough there is also a tinge of amusement about it when I think of human nature as it is. Also a certain exhilaration in having to meet a new situation.

Fortunately for us, we are none of us helpless and incompetent individuals. We can each one of us look after ourselves as well as others. We can earn money whenever necessary as well as spend it. So I fail

to see anything tragic about it all. It just involves some waste of time, some adjustment of our lives, and for the rest it does not count.

It is obvious that I cannot tolerate any interruption in Chand's, Tara's or Rita's education because of monetary difficulties. So long as I have any money this is not going to happen. And I do not think I shall ever lack money for what I consider essential needs. I have enough disrespect for money for it never to desert me wholly. I have known in the past and I know now how to adjust myself to changing circumstances without allowing them to make much difference to the course of my life.

Anyway, in view of possible developments, I want to find out exactly how I stand financially. I hardly know. Will you therefore please ask Kamalnayan or the Bachhraj people to send me (through you) a full statement of my account, investments &c. with them?

You mention a lake in Mahabaleshwar—I did not know of this. Is it a big lake?

Love

Your loving
Papu

I have now received Louis Fischer's *A Week with Gandhi*. Also Ahmad Abbas's *Tomorrow is Ours*⁴⁹⁵ and *Tomorrow* ²⁴⁹⁶—This last-named sent by the publishers—Padma.

P

May 27, 1944

Darling Indu,

I have your letter of May 19th—your 63rd.

The newspapers tell us that Mahabaleshwar has run short of food and army lorries had to be requisitioned to rush foodstuffs there. I hope you were not starved. That is not likely to happen for Mahabaleshwar

495. A novel set in the context of the national movement. A marriage breaks up because of the conflicts it creates between a modern youth and the old conservative outlook.

496. *Tomorrow*, edited by Raja Rao and Ahmed Ali, was a compilation of short stories, poems and essays by writers of different languages.

is not just any place in India but a spot where the elect go and their needs are always catered for.

It has been hot here and amazingly dry. I suppose the rains will begin soon and even before the regular monsoon starts, the winds change and are cooler. It is really surprising how dry this place can get. I thought that Allahabad and the north were dry enough with the hot *loo* blowing. But apparently there is something in the air here which beats Allahabad in this respect. This dryness affects the skin and produces an uncomfortable feeling. I did not know what this was due to. Others also complained and they said it was dryness. They took to oil massage but I dislike messing about with oil. So now I sleep with a pot of vaseline next to me and if I feel 'dried up' in the course of the night I apply some of the stuff on my arms and legs. This gives relief. I suppose the rains will end this dryness of the air.

I do not think I ever met Dr. Bhandari's girls though he spoke to me about them and showed me their photographs. He was very fond of them.

I have received a number of books from Karaka⁴⁹⁷—his own productions mostly. One of them is a play—*Colour Bar* by two Oxford men—Presumably one of them being Karaka himself. It is not a very bright play.

I have been reading little lately and all the good books you have sent me repose in the bookshelf, which is over-full now. For the last six weeks I have spent a good deal of time in writing. I am beginning to tire of this and perhaps one of these days I shall put my pen and paper away and seek relief in reading. I am not very satisfied with what I have written. Yet, even though it may not be up to much it is a useful discipline for the mind. It forces one to think precisely and to express oneself clearly. Indeed there is sometimes an element of surprise in seeing one's thought put on an attire of words and phrases and appear in black and white. Normally one thinks vaguely and the thought is all rounded up with no sharp ends; it fades off with wishes and odd fits of knowledge. In the old days education both in India and in Europe included a study of logic so that the student may know how to think and reason clearly. In Europe this was Aristotle's logic; India had and has her own system of *Nyaya* न्याय, which is still taught in the Sanskrit schools and colleges. Both these are out-of-date and far too formal in their approach. They tend to make the mind scholastic and rather rigid, and yet they served a useful purpose and did

497. D.F. Karaka (1911-1974); founder-editor of the *Current* and author of several books.

give a training to the mind. It is surprising how untrained most people's minds are now, even the minds of otherwise well-educated people. We cannot go back to Aristotle or न्याय but the modern substitute is a scientific training, and especially practical work in science.

I remember, in my school days, there used to be a great argument in England, as elsewhere, of the relative value and importance of a classical and a scientific training. People used to grow quite excited and heated over it, each party or group emphasizing the value of its own wares. I suppose science has now won all along the line and the classics are just tolerated. That is right in a way and it was inevitable. We simply can't do without science and the old rigid methods of classical education isolated a person from the world of today. And yet science by itself is pretty dry and the scientist is not always the most lovable of men. He lacks something, the poise and calm outlook on life which the classics often gave. Compare H.G. Wells with Gilbert Murray. Well, I suppose, we must combine the two somehow.

I had a letter from Betty the other day. There is a background of mental unrest and worry about it as there usually is about her letters, unless something has happened to cheer her up, and then, for a while, she is full of exuberance. Very foolishly I try to dole out good advice to her, as if this makes the slightest difference. Probably it just irritates. And yet I cannot quite get out of my school-masterish habit. Each person has to find his or her own way out of the problems that beset one. No one else can really help much and probably the most one can do is to understand and sympathise and be silent. Usually the troublesome things are the little things of life—somehow we brace ourselves up when a big thing turns up. My own way out for present worry over some small matter is to switch off my mind from it and think of some big thing. That restores balance and perspective. That is why, it is said, that a major disaster, like a war, does one good service. It pulls people out of their ruts and makes them forget for a while their innumerable petty worries. The major trouble swallows up the smaller ones.

I have come to think that city life, agreeable as it is, somehow does not fulfil the demands of human nature. I like city life and would hate to be buried in a village. But unrelieved city life cut off from nature and the land does seem to produce a disjointed temperament, a lack of mental poise. Anyway it would have that effect on me. I must have both—the city and nature. However for the present I have Ahmadnagar Fort, which is neither!

We have been here now for 21 months and 3 weeks. That reminds me that this is already my longest term. Previously no single term has

exceeded 21 months—the sentence was usually two years but with remissions &c., this worked out at about 21 months or a little less. It is true that more than once two terms have often followed one another with only a brief gap in between—but there was a gap, and even a few days makes a difference. And then, previously, there used to be interviews and some kind of personal touch was kept up. Not so this time. So far as you are concerned I did not see you for nearly two years in 1939-41. But that was not because I was in prison—You were in London—Leysin &c. while I was in India, mostly out of prison, partly in Dehra Dun Jail.

How people must have changed, I often think, during these past 21 months or more. How you must have changed. When we meet, as I suppose we will some time or other, I shall be feeling about with the tentacles of my mind, trying to find what is new, what is old in you. So also with others. When we meet people frequently we do not notice the change for we are continually adapting ourselves to it. But after a long interval changes are more apparent. Children grow up amazingly and are hardly recognizable; boys and girls become men and women.

It is not merely the lapse of time that counts; it is what we have lived through that makes a difference. Recent years have been very abnormal and each one of us has a particular stock of experience and a store of feelings and impressions, each one of which has made some little difference—And so strangers creep in where friends used to be.

I am very glad that Raja is definitely out. Not that it made much difference whether he was in or out but this middle stage is upsetting, especially for a nervous person like Raja. He can now devote himself to improving his health, and that, from all accounts, requires a great deal of attention. I understand that the children—Harsha and Ajit—are going to Gwalior after all.

Have you given my yarn to Psyche to get it woven?

Betty wrote to me that old Mrs. Gazdar⁴⁹⁸ of Allahabad died recently after a long illness. The news made me think how cut off we get from people we do not meet. I had not met her for a long time—did she come to your wedding?—and I had vaguely come to the conclusion that she had died. She was a good, kindly sort and I am sorry.

498 Wife of Nadir Guzdar, proprietor of the Raja Ram Motilal Guzdar & Co. in Allahabad and a close friend of the Nehru family.

Will you write a few lines to Nadir conveying my condolences?
G. D. Birla has sent me a book written partly by him—It is in Hindi
रुपये की कहानी.⁹⁹

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my 63rd letter to you.

June 3, 1944

Darling Indu,

I have received your letter of May 26—the 64th.

I am glad you have decided to go to Poona instead of Bombay from Mahabaleshwar. I suppose my next letter should be sent to Poona but I shall await your instructions in this matter. In Poona you will be comfortable enough either with Nuri or Sir Govind Madgaonkar (I am not sure if I have spelt his name correctly). Perhaps you will feel easier with Nuri because you know her well. Madgaonkar's house is a well-appointed one and he is a methodical person. Sarojini, who stayed with him, told me that the radio was functioning most of the time. Madgaonkar is a very decent person though a bit censorious of others. I suppose that comes with age, especially when one lives a retired life and has nothing definite to do. Doesn't he talk a little like the 'Poonah' kind of Britisher? I do not remember having met his daughter Usha.

Jivraj's release is comforting and now you can have the satisfaction of knowing that he is at hand and can be consulted when necessary. He is a very competent and sound doctor.

I suppose it is right and inevitable that you should read books on babies and children. And yet there is always a possibility of overdoing this kind of thing—or rather of being so overburdened with advice that one's natural commonsense hardly functions and one lives on edge, trying always to remember what to do next according to the directions. I remember Betty & Raja mugging up such books together and referring to them for advice at every time. This very attitude of doubt and

499. *Story of Money*; it is a survey of the Government of India's currency policy; Parasnath was the co-author.

hesitation with a tinge of excitement somehow affects the child sometimes in the wrong way, for children, like animals, are peculiarly susceptible to psychological states. The books you have been reading and which you mention are good in their own way and give a lot of sound advice. But it is as well to remember that many experts do not wholly agree with them and in fact there has been a tendency to turn away from this method of treating children. Probably it is a good method for the 'difficult' and 'problem' child, but many children are not, to begin with, problem children at all and in their case this treatment may not be wholly suitable. It may result in a normal child developing problem traits. There is a well-known school at Dartington Hall in Devon or Cornwell run on these lines and I heard rather curious stories about the children there. One father was quite worried about his son there, a lad of ten or so.

Problem and such like children have, I suppose, always existed but undoubtedly they are peculiarly common in our present age, especially in Europe and America. They are the products of this age of transition where everything is changing so rapidly that it is difficult to have any standards of values to judge by. Also the small families which are so usual today—one child or two—result in problem children. A larger family, several children, has disadvantages but from the child's point of view it is usually better and he has a more normal life with companions growing up with him. To some extent, but not wholly (except perhaps in a socialist country like Russia), school and a communal life can take the place of family life.

A child has to be treated as an individual and given every opportunity to grow as an individual. But it is at least equally important to treat him as a social being who can live at peace and cooperation with others. That makes one think of the kind of society he will have to live in—a difficult business today when society itself is changing. In any event the cooperative habits and traits have to be developed or else he will find it difficult to fit in anywhere. Usually single children, who have been looked after a great deal, have a hard time when they go out into the world and have to fend for themselves. Bertrand Russell says somewhere that parents are wholly unsuited to bring up their children; they are too intensely interested in them to take a dispassionate view or to treat them normally.

You say you want the child to be happy—of course. But then what is happiness? There is the solid content of a fairly prosperous peasant; there are higher grades of intellectual and emotional happiness. There is the happiness of the person who is drunk or who is under the influence of some drug. I suppose, if you analyse your mind, you will

find that happiness is more often negative than positive—an absence of pain & suffering. And yet how is one to be happy if he knows and sees another in pain? A sensitive person will suffer continually on behalf of others. An insensitive person may escape that but at the cost of much that is fine in life. Long ago (probably 140 years ago) Leopardi the Italian poet wrote to his sister on the occasion of her marriage: "Thou shall have children, either cowards or unhappy; choose thou the latter." That is perhaps an extreme view but there is some truth in it.

Ultimately we cannot be really happy till the whole world is happy and that is a large order. Mere avoidance of unhappiness, not easily possible, may itself result in isolation and boredom and a malaise which is worse than definite unhappiness. We are so organically connected with others & with the world that we cannot both live a full life and yet avoid the world's ills. Escapism does not pay in the long run, quite apart from its moral worth.

What then is one to do? That is a big question which has been asked almost since human beings began to think. It seems to me that the only thing to aim at is the power or capacity to extract happiness, or perhaps it is better to call it peace and calm, out of unhappiness itself. Not to escape from anything but to face it and yet be above it in a way; not to be overcome by it and to retain in spite of everything a sense of life and its larger purposes, a feeling of life fulfilment. How to do that is a difficult enough job and each person has to learn for himself and it seems that only life, with all its waywardness and shock, can teach. The most we can do is to prepare the background for it.

Read your books by all means but do not attach too much importance to everything they contain. A story of Li-Po the great Chinese poet comes to my mind. A young man, desiring to become a poet, went to Li-Po and asked him how he was to train himself for the purpose; 'Master, how can I become a poet.' Li-Po said: 'Read all the rules and books and then forget them and observing nature put your feeling in words.' You mention Ethel Mannin's book.⁵⁰⁰ She is a likable person and I am sure what she says has sense in it. But it struck me suddenly,—has she any children? I do not know but somehow I doubt it.

There is a passage in one of Gilbert Murray's books which might interest you—He says that we must be "careful always to seek for truth and not for our own emotional satisfaction, careful not to neglect the

500. *Confessions and Impressions.*

real needs of men and women through basing our life on dreams; and remembering above all to walk gently in a world when the lights are dim and the very stars wander."

Madgaonkar's dissatisfaction with people who do not make their wills is understandable. Partly he is justified in so far as I am concerned, but only partly. It is true that I have so far not made any formal will but I have not been wholly neglectful of the future. My father—*Dadu*—did not leave a will. Yet I know that in the course of his life he made his will more than once. I suppose he tore them all up and deliberately decided not to have a will. But at the same time he made such careful arrangements that nothing untoward should happen, for he realized that my money sense was weak and I was far too engrossed in other matters. Even apart from a will, I was his natural and only heir, under Hindu law. The arrangements he made were so good that they saved me a deal of trouble and if I have carried on in a carefree manner for all these years since he died, it is largely due to his foresight and care.

So far as I am concerned I have not been wholly neglectful. Knowing that my life might be considered mortgaged in a sense I have tried to fix things in a way so that my presence or absence would make no difference. It was because of these arrangements that there was no financial worry at the time of Mummy's last illness in Europe, or your stay in Switzerland, Oxford &c. Even if I had popped off suddenly at any time, those arrangements would have stood. I cannot bring myself to kowtow to money but I am not lacking in method even in my monetary dealings, though from a normal point of view I might be wasteful and live beyond my means. But the idea of hoarding up, or holding tight to money and living on interest &c. irritates me, and the whole conception of passing on ancestral funds by inheritance from generation to generation does not particularly appeal to me. Besides there is not much to pass on and quite possibly there will be nothing left! Apart from this house—Anand Bhawan—almost everything I possess is with Bachhraj. They have been good caretakers of it and poor Jamnalalji showered good advice on me which I seldom acted up to. To Bachhraj I have given definite instructions that in case anything happens to me you are my sole heir and will be entitled to take possession of all my funds & securities with them. Even without my saying so legally you are my heir. Although these arrangements are solid enough and not likely to crack, it struck me last year, here in Ahmadnagar Fort, that I ought to make a will. Of course I could not do so here. But I prepared a draft so that whenever I might have the chance I might execute a formal will. The operative part of it was brief enough but there was, inevitably,

much else. That draft is out of date now but it will help to remind me what I have to do.

Money and inheritance &c. do not worry me. But I do not want to leave a mess behind when I die. I do not want others to have to take the trouble to clear up a mess of my making.

1 Regarding Chitnis who wants to publish a Marathi translation of some of my essays and articles, I have seen the list and I have no objection to his doing so. I do not examine credentials closely in regard to these odd articles. So he can go ahead. But his publishers must confirm the agreement in writing. Agreements are with publishers, not with translators.

2 The Mathrubhumi Press of Calicut can of course bring out a second edition of the Malayalam edition of the *Autobiography* on the same terms as previously. They can also bring out a Malayalam edition of *Glimpses* on these terms, but I hope they will see to it that the book is properly translated. Also there must be a time limit, so that the publications may not be indefinitely delayed.

3 Assamese edition of *Letters*. I cannot give permission to a new person unless I am sure that the old party (Wide India Co.) has not functioned so far. Better send a registered letter to the latter to find out. Also if you like you can refer to Gopinath Bardoloi (the ex-Premier of Assam), Gauhati, Assam. You can ask him about both parties, and whether an Assamese edition has come out or not. Also his advice can be taken about the translation &c.

I have collected quite a large number of old foreign papers. I think I shall send them to you when you are in Poona. What do you do with them?

When you make any fresh arrangements about the publication of my books, please make entries in the notebook reserved for this purpose—Also any other relevant matter—your writing and not receiving reply &c. This will facilitate matters for future reference.

Love

Your loving
Papua

This is my letter No. 64.

June 6, Tuesday

A month today since Bapu was released. A month of some anxiety and a good deal of expectation. The anxiety is much less for he has slowly improved in health. And yet the pace is very slow and the doctors are not satisfied. He does not take kindly to medicine and wants to stick to his nature treatment. Probably he knows his body and its working best. He will improve gradually but, having regard to his age, he will not regain his old vigour and vitality. Yet whatever his age and his state of health, inevitably he has to carry the burden of India. No one can relieve him, no one can take his place. He gets tired very easily and probably cannot stand much argument. There is no way out of this difficulty.

The eager expectations have now toned down, at least in the sense that something new will happen soon. The one clear statement⁵⁰¹ he has made—that he cannot withdraw the August Resolution: it is the breath of life to him—has cheered up many and depressed many others outside. I expected something of the kind from him and felt pleased. There appears to be no room for any half-way position—

So, although we expect changes to take place, for Bapu's very presence outside is a continual challenge to the *status quo*, we are more settled in mind. For my part, I have kept myself busy with writing work and the weeks have gone by all too quickly. I began writing on April 13th and since then I have written something almost daily. Day before yesterday I finished a long chapter and came to the end of a period. So I decided to take a few days off—I have written so far 374 pages of manuscript. That is, I imagine, a little more than half of what I intend writing. I have reached the eve of the Moslem invasion of India. The book should be about 650-700 pages (MSS.), but it is difficult to say.

Now that I feel that we are likely to stay on here for some months, the sense of hurry has gone— Another two months should see me nearing the end—

501. In a letter to M.R. Jayakar dated 20 May, which was published on 1 June 1944, Mahatma Gandhi had stated that "as things stand there is no question of my withdrawing the August Resolution."

6.6.44

Darling Betty,

I received your letter of the 19th May some little time ago. I was very glad to learn of Raja's discharge. It really does not matter very much whether one is in jail or outside provided one can adapt oneself to the environment. But when one is ill it does make a difference and there is a lack of facilities for treatment and an uncertainty which leads to mental depression and worrying. This uncertainty does not lessen even when one is released for a short fixed period and has to go back to jail. Instead in some ways this cat and mouse business is more irritating and it becomes difficult to settle down for treatment or anything else. So I am greatly relieved to know that Raja is definitely out now and can look after himself properly. Naturally the first thing to do is to have a complete overhaul and know exactly how matters stand.

I think you have decided wisely about Harsha and Ajit going to the Gwalior School. Children always profit from living in company with others of their age in an impersonal atmosphere. Home life is necessary but too strong a dose of it is not always good. School and home, between the two, establish a kind of balance, and home becomes more desirable when it is not always there. School helps in developing self-reliance and the habit of cooperation, which are so essential for every growing child, and indeed for a grown-up person also.

Give my love to Raja and the children. How they—the children—must have grown.

Love,

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

June 10, 1944

Darling Indu,

Your letter of June 2nd reached me yesterday. It was your No. 65. I do not quite know where to write to you for you say that you are likely to leave Mahabaleshwar by the 10th, that is today. In any event you ought to be in Poona by the time this letter gets through. But I do not know the address of Nuri's house in Poona, or rather I have

forgotten it for I used to know it and have also visited it. I am therefore sending this letter to Mahabaleshwar hoping that Treacher & Co. will forward it on.

Do not trouble to send olive oil. I have a little which I use for massage when I have a slight sprain. I can easily get more if necessary. Just at present there is no need to combat dryness for the rains have begun here and we have had a heavy downpour.

You mention Anand—Where is he now? Still on the executive side, or has he been sent to the front somewhere?

To remain absolutely silent मौन for a period must be good, both for the nerves and as a conservator of energy. What an amount of energy we waste by talk. I have never deliberately observed silence in this way. But circumstances have helped me or, if you like, compelled me. I have spent so many months, on previous occasions, in something like solitary confinement, though it was not technically so. All the talking I did was with the prisoners who cooked my food etc., or with the jailor who came round for a couple of minutes in the morning. So for months at a time my talking was reduced to a minimum and I got so unused to it that when interview day came I was a little exhausted. Here in Ahmadnagar I have of course to do much more talking for there are many of us together meeting each other continually. And yet this is less than normal. Occasionally I have talked more than usual and felt tired because of it and even developed a very slight sore throat. It is surprising how soon we get out of our normal habits, or if you prefer, develop new habits. Lack of exercise or use of any organ makes it slacken off and weaken. But I have no doubt that occasional silences are good for the nervous system and do conserve energy.

Yes, you need not send any more books just yet, unless you come across some very special one. I want another six weeks relief from books, more or less. But there is one little book which you might get if you see it anywhere. This is a new Penguin—Hogben's *Interglossa*,⁵⁰² or some such name. It deals with a new artificial language. Also it might be worthwhile to buy any new books that appear good, and to keep them.

Do you remember?—you wrote to Krishna Menon for one or two books I had mentioned. Have you not heard from him at all?

502. In this book, Hogben had produced a detailed blueprint of yet another international language.

Who is Tambimuttu? Do you know him? The man who has prepared an anthology of war verse, which you sent me.⁵⁰³ I have seen occasional reviews by him in the English periodicals and he appears to have broadcasted also—B.B.C.—on literary topics. Probably he has married some English girl as he refers to his wife who seems to help him in his literary work.

I note what you say about Jamia's reply. It is odd that they cannot get paper when plenty of new books are coming out. They are not very enterprising. I suppose there is no help for it and we must leave them to function in their own slow way.

I think you are right about the Marathi edition of *Glimpses*. It is best to be cautious and not to take any step which might cause trouble. Besides you have taken a High Court Judge's opinion and there is nothing more to be said about it. Apart from the legal side, I am anxious that Shah should not nurse a grievance. He has suffered a good deal and I do not wish to add to his troubles. But what is one to do if a man is not in a position to do a job well? Even according to him he has to rely now on some other small press—Besides he and his new press will probably find it difficult to get paper, which a more up-to-date press might manage to procure. The money involved is really a small sum and I am not interested in it—I am only anxious to get the book out. I think it might be pointed out to Shah that the arrangements he has suggested appear wholly unsatisfactory. Anyway you had better proceed as you think best and avoid entanglements.

If, ultimately, the Poona people are given permission to bring out the Marathi *Glimpses* the terms will be the same as for the *Autobiography*—10% royalty on price of books sold. About the timelimit, two months is too short a period. No publisher can give this promise even normally, much less in wartime. Probably a six-month period is nearer the mark. But the right way to proceed is to ask the publisher to suggest his own timelimit and if this is at all reasonable, to accept it. The book is a big one. It may have to come out in parts.

All monies for royalties should go to Bachhraj. But please note then in the record.

We are getting fruit two or three times a week, which is ample. Mangoes have come, also quite good figs; other kinds of fruit also sometimes.

503. *Poetry in Wartime* (1942), a collection of poems written since the beginning of the war and published in *Poetry*, the editor of which was M.J. Tambimuttu, a Sinhalese poet settled in London.

As you intend going to Bombay about the end of the month to consult Purandare I suppose you will remain there afterwards. Have you fixed up your abode there? If Juhu is approved, I presume you will have no difficulty in getting a shack for most people leave when the rains begin. My next letter to you will be sent to Poona— By that time, I hope, the address will have reached me. The one after that may have to go to Bombay or Juhu. Let me know the address there.

The newspapers say that Bapu will be going to Poona soon. You will meet him there.

This is my letter No. 65.

Love

Your loving
Papu

Have you any news of Amma? I suppose she is in Lahore now —How is she and what is her address?

June 17—Saturday

The days pass by—I keep busy writing mostly, although sometimes I feel very dissatisfied with what I have written. Dissatisfied not only with the manner and content of my writing, but with the thought of the past. Curious how I am interested when I am writing about a period which appeals to me, which adds to my national and racial conceit, and bored when I have to deal with more unfortunate periods. I have reached the end of the Moghul period and now I suppose I shall be still more irritated for I shall soon be dealing with the last phase—the British period.

Is it worthwhile, I wonder, writing all this stale stuff? I thought perhaps I might be able to put some life into it but now I doubt it. Some passages here and there may be good; as a rule it is heavy going. It is difficult to judge of one's own writing. Anyway it has been very helpful to my thinking. More definite pictures emerge in my own mind and, writing about the past, somehow I get rid of the burden of the past.

There is no fear now that I might be unable to finish what I am writing by an early release from internment. Unless, of course, I grow weary and give it up myself, which is not impossible. In another month I shall finish with the past—and then the present and the future. Shall I deal with them? I do not know—I am not sure—

X

X

X

X

Bapu has come to Poona. By the end of this month or early in July he might come out with some statement—some step. From all appearances no marked change in the present position will take place. Churchill and India's freedom are two incompatibles, and Churchill and his lot count both in England and India, unfortunately. His conservative, British Empire attitude is evident in all he does. He has been a brilliant war leader for Britain but what a lot of trouble he is storing up for England, Europe & the world by his incapacity to get out of his nineteenth century mentality. His praise of France, fulsome and entirely uncalled for, was significant ⁵⁰⁴

X

X

X

X

Some nights ago I shouted and moaned more than usual, disturbing my neighbours. I am told that I make ghastly noises. Horrid and extraordinary nightmares oppress me but they fade away on awakening. My waking hours have not been bad, except for occasional depression, a malaise, a nostalgic feeling for all that is unattainable. And yet at night I go off the deep end into some unknown, fantastic and rather horrible land. What is this that troubles me? What possesses my unconscious self? Is it just the consequence of the events I have known during the last quarter of a century or more? Or is it some childhood memory or shock which I cannot recall? I do not remember anything that affected me so strongly in childhood. Of course I think, without deliberate intent, of my past and of the many things that might have been otherwise. But all this does not explain these nightmares and my shouting in sleep.

It is an old habit, this shouting and groaning in sleep. Kamala used to tell me about it. In prison I used to do it sometimes. I remember how, during the Cripps negotiations, one night I was more than usually noisy and Rajan dashed into my room to find out what ailed me.

There is an old childhood dream which I remember. It came to me repeatedly with variations. Some horrid creature was pursuing me, something that I could not clearly see or visualise, and I ran my fastest away

504. On 25 May 1944, Churchill said in the House of Commons that "we have all rejoiced at the brilliant and skilful fighting of the French Moroccan and Algerian divisions in the heart-shaking battles... The French Committee of National Liberation has the credit of having prepared these troops... they also govern a vast empire, all of whose strategic points are freely placed at the disposal of the United Nations."

from it. I ran and ran but always it was close behind me. Ultimately I entered a building and mounted a high tower. There near the top I locked myself from the inside in a room. But there was a high window or a skylight and to my exceeding horror I saw a huge hand come through this window and stretch itself out towards me. It was only a hand with an arm attached, nothing more. There was no escape possible for me from that room. The hand approached, came nearer and nearer, and then I awoke in a cold sweat, shivering with fright and horror.

x x x x

For the past few years or so the nightmares have usually something to do with a feeling of oppression, of being unable to do what I want to do. I want to move and my limbs do not obey me. I want to shout and warn someone and my throat is parched and dry and no voice comes out of it, or just a hoarse grunt.

x x x x

What is all this due to? What old suppressions? Is it sex—Partly perhaps, though I do not think this is the primary cause. Is it the feeling of helplessness and oppression due to political causes? Perhaps.

x x x x

Two or three days ago I received from Indu a copy of Eve Curie's⁵⁰⁵ new book: *Journey among Warriors*. Inevitably and egoistically I turned to the chapter in which she describes her brief visit to Anand Bhawan. I read it through and her references to me pleased me and fed my vanity.⁵⁰⁶ That evening I felt more cheerful and light-hearted than usual. How little things make a difference in the dull routine of jail!

x x x x

505. (b. 1904); daughter of Marie Curie; she visited the war fronts in Africa, the Near East, Russia, Iran, China and India and wrote *Journey among Warriors* (1943).

506. "Nehru the patriot was fighting for the liberation of his country; Nehru the socialist was fighting for its modernisation. In fact he was not the champion of one single cause but a chain of causes that he visualised as closely intertwined. One was the emancipation of India. Another was anti-imperialism. A third one was anti-fascism. Last but not the least cause was anti-capitalism and the establishment of a world economy based on Marxian principles."

What is going to happen to India—to the world—to me? Where do we go in this devil dance of ours? Has all this no meaning, or is there some meaning which we cannot grasp? Some lines of Osbert Sitwell,⁵⁰⁷ which I have read recently, stick in my mind:

Love of my life, my heart,
Where are we going?
Into what hooded dark
Is the wind blowing?
"Oh, how our footfalls die,
Alone, along the darkness burning!
Can we not turn and fly?"
"No. Time has no turning."

June 17, 1944

Darling Indu,

I have your letter of June 5—No. 66. Last evening I had a letter from Amma from Lahore. It took nearly three and a half weeks to reach me. Hindi letters are greatly delayed. Amma says that she intends sending either Rup or Bappi to Bombay at the time of your expected confinement. She is herself much too ill to travel. She asks me what I think of this suggestion. I have no particular views on the subject. It all depends on how you feel about it. If you would like to have either Rup or Bappi near you at the time tell Amma so. If you do not think it is necessary for either of them to take the trouble to come—for it is no pleasure to travel nowadays—then you might suggest this to Amma. But if you feel that Amma is really anxious to send someone I think it might be better to let her have her way. I suppose you know Chand's address—anyway I am giving it: Bharat Mansions, Flat No. 3C, Lahore.

Amma says that news has reached her of my ill-health. Tell her that this is incorrect. I have had no physical and bodily trouble and am keeping fit.

Amma also mentions that Kailas and Sheila with their two babes, Gautam and Dipa, might sail for India some time this month if they get passages. That is a big 'if' and I doubt very much if they will succeed in this for some time to come. The invasion of France has probably upset these passenger services.

507. (1892-1969); English novelist and author.

This invasion is taking place right on the spot where you and I with Mr. Shah⁵⁰⁸ spent some days in July 1938. We were staying near Trouville—What was the name of the place? I cannot remember it.

I wrote to you—was it last week?—of the long silences in jail life. Here I have taken on a new job which interferes with the silence and gives some work to the throat. I read out the newspapers daily to Mahmud. His eyes give him a lot of trouble and newspaper reading is particularly painful and tiring for him. As a matter of fact one of his eyes does not function at all—So I decided, many months ago, to give him this relief and let him read books only which are easier for the eyes, unless the type is too small. I do not take kindly to newspapers, though I cannot easily do without them. I want naturally to know what is happening, and yet I resent giving time to reading odd bits of news which I am likely to forget a day or two later. Reading to Mahmud, I have to read not only what interests me but what I think might interest him. So this becomes a longish process and if, by any chance, Churchill has been delivering one of his long rhetorical speeches, I am quite exhausted by the time I have done with it and my throat is slightly hoarse. Anyway this is good practice for the throat or else it might grow rusty from little use.

Mahmud and I share one room. It is a big room but sometimes I think of Virginia Woolf's book: *A Room Of One's Own*⁵⁰⁹ and of the advantages of having a room to oneself.

I note what you say about my Hindi publications issued by the Sasta Sahitya Mandal. As for Visva-Bharati and the Bengali edition of the *Letters*, I have read with some wonder and amusement the long extract from their letter which you give. Why is it that we in India are so excessively slow in doing anything? We allow matters to drift, expecting that in course of time something will happen, some solution of our difficulty will automatically appear and we shall be saved the trouble of thinking and acting. Is it that our blood-stream runs slowly in our veins and arteries? I wonder. There is something of course in not wasting energy needlessly and there is enormous waste of this kind in the world today. What a lot of purposeless rushing about there is, a-going backwards and forwards and ultimately remaining where you were.

508. Probably Popatlal Shah, a businessman in Paris.

509. It discusses fiction and stresses the importance of seeing human beings in their relation to each other and in relation to reality. It also advocates women's rights and protests against the discrimination women face.

That is action divorced from thought. But thought divorced from action is equally futile.

These and other reflections occurred to me when I read the Visva-Bharati message. I am not particularly interested in what they do about my little book. I have given them the Bengali copyright free and they have no royalties to pay. It was really a biggish gift for this book has made pots of money for other publishers—not our Bengali friend Das Gupta who sits tight on the few hundred copies he has got and does nothing about them. Several hundred thousand copies of the book have been disposed of in the U.P. & elsewhere. The English original edition was prescribed some years ago by the Calcutta University for the matriculation or some such examination.

Realising that Das Gupta was totally incapable of dealing with the book, either to his own advantage or anyone else's, I gave the Bengali copyright to Visva-Bharati. I made it clear to Krishna Kripalani that they could go ahead with it immediately, if they so chose, without waiting for Das Gupta to dispose of his remaining stock of a few hundred copies. I made this clear to Das Gupta also but I told him that he could continue to sell his own copies so long as they remained with him. He could bring out no new edition. Any person with the least intelligence or energy could have disposed of them to the booksellers within a few days at a reasonable discount. But no; Das Gupta waits for some sign from the heavens, and Visva-Bharati waits for some sign from Das Gupta. So there we are! As the heavens are not interested in making such signs we are likely to wait on and on.

Well, it really does not matter so far as I am concerned for Visva-Bharati have full authority to do what they like. What bores and irritates me is this slackness and passivity and incapacity to get a move on. Is this due to what is called the artistic temperament?

You can tell Visva-Bharati that there is no question of my approving now of their publication. I approved & gave permission long ago. They can suit their convenience. They might inform Das Gupta and suggest to him—for he appears to be a helpless person in this matter—that it might be worthwhile for him to dispose of his entire stock at a suitable discount to a Calcutta bookseller. He (Das Gupta) need not pay me any royalty on this. This will bring cash immediately to him and rid him of the burden. After Visva-Bharati have brought out their edition, he will find it almost impossible to sell his higher-priced book. But what Das Gupta does or does not do should not affect Visva-Bharati's action.

Give my love to Nuri and Psyche if she is there—A bottle of honey has reached me—probably the one you sent through Betty—I sent you

a big bundle of foreign papers to Poona a few days ago. My last letter dated 10/6 was sent to Mahabaleshwar.

This is my letter No. 66. Thank you for Eve Curie's new book.
Love

Your loving
Papu

June 20, Tuesday

The papers yesterday contained Gandhiji's correspondence⁵¹⁰ with Wavell—part of it—Feb-March 1944—also Bapu's parting shot⁵¹¹ at Linlithgow. Evidently he has written frequently to the Govt. of India since his arrest.

What effect did this produce on me? Mixed reactions, I suppose and the more I think of it the more mixed they get. For thought leads me beyond the correspondence itself to the basic problem and all that has happened during these past years. The best way to judge of the correspondence itself is not to think about it but to examine the immediate reaction—Is this one of satisfaction and relief or one of depression? Almost everything that happens, small or big, produces some such immediate reaction which it is difficult to analyse and yet which must be based on the thought-patterns in the mind.

Well, my immediate reaction was one of relief and satisfaction—Bapu's letters were characteristic of him and, though long and occasionally involved, good. They make us realise how his mind has been functioning.

Wavell's letters are straight and I like them better in a way, even though they irritate me, than Linlithgow's. What is the good of arguing when the premises are so entirely different? We start from wholly different backgrounds and bases of thought, we look towards different objectives—how then can arguments fit in?

Time has no turning—nor has history. And the Indo-British relationship has got to bear that burden of history which cannot be forgotten—

510. In this Mahatma Gandhi refuted the charges made against him and the Congress during his detention at the Aga Khan's house and explained the implications of the August Resolution.

511. Mahatma Gandhi's last letter to Lord Linlithgow dated 27 September 1943 sought to bring home to him the wrong of "having countenanced untruth, and that regarding one whom you at one time considered as your friend."

June 24, 1944

Darling Indu,

I have received your two letters dated 13/6 and 19/6 from Poona. They are numbers 67 and 68 but the numbering is in inverse order for I received the letter of the 19/6 first. The earlier letter was delayed—no doubt because one of its enclosures was Bachhraj's statement of my account with them. This statement must have been of interest to the censor and the people behind him and subjected to careful scrutiny to discover any secrets about my income and expenditure. I remember reading in the papers about 18 months ago or more that the Bombay police or C.I.D. had gone to Bachhraj & Co's office & insisted on examining, under the wide and generous provisions of the Defence of India Rules, various accounts, including mine. There was great excitement at the discovery of what looked like a big sum of money—a hundred thousand dollars—which had been sent to me from America. This obviously was some secret fund sent for unlawful activities—So the bright officer of the Bombay C.I.D. must have thought. As a matter of fact it was a very much smaller sum sent by *Fortune* in payment for my article—\$ 1000. But the American way of writing it is \$ 1000.00. Hence the excitement—

I note that you are going to stay on in Poona till Jivraj fixes up some date with Purandare—probably early in July. The longer you stay in Poona the better for it must be much healthier there than in Bombay. Round about what date is the confinement expected? Naturally you cannot be sure.

I am not surprised at your inability to get a good nurse. Nurses are at a premium now and, quite apart from high salaries, they would naturally prefer the more entertaining *milieu* of war service than the duller occupation of looking after a baby. The idea of having Anna⁵¹² with you appeals to me. I like Anna and I think she is very helpful in many ways. I hope, therefore, that she will agree to your proposal. Of course you will engage a competent ayah also. I do not suppose even good ayahs are easily available now.

Certainly you should pay Anna (and the ayah) from my account. It would be better, however, for you to deal with Anna directly and not through Ladli Bhai. Ladli Bhai is very careful and tremendously helpful but he is not always as tactful as he might be with others. Small

512. Anna Ormsholt, a Danish woman and an old friend of the Nehru family who at various times acted as a governess of the children.

personal difficulties might thus arise if Anna had to deal with Ladli Bhai. You should therefore draw upon my account with Bachhraj yourself either monthly or at longer intervals, as you choose, and make payments out of it. It will probably be better for you to draw out a lump sum—say Rs. 500/- at a time and when this is spent to draw out another similar sum. Out of this you can pay Anna and the ayah and meet other expenses of the confinement &c. You have also to spend money on books and other articles sent to me.

I have been sending Betty occasional cheques to meet expenses on my behalf.

About servants' salaries. Khaliq is right when he says that the military are paying much bigger salaries to motor drivers. But I am afraid I cannot compete with the Government of India in this matter. As a matter of fact we do not require a chauffeur at all at present. It is only because Khaliq is an old servant, for whose welfare I consider myself partly responsible, that I keep him on. I do not think it is right to push out old servants simply because we happen to have no present use for them. At the same time I do not want to come in the way of Khaliq's advancement. I shall be glad if he gets on in life. So if he can get better employment elsewhere, I have no objection at all to his taking it. He can always come back to me when he wants to or has no other work. Therefore you can explain this to him and tell him that I am afraid I cannot manage a higher salary for him than 32/- a month at present. He will get this as long as he is with us. He can try to better it elsewhere if he can. I notice that in Ladli Bhai's list he is paid 27/-. This should be increased anyhow to 32/- as I said before. If he chooses to work elsewhere, then of course this stops.

I mentioned Khaliq's daughter to you in a previous letter and suggested that something might be paid for her education occasionally—I think this might be made a regular payment of Rs. 10/- a month. This has nothing to do with Khaliq's remaining with us or not. The amount should be paid even if Khaliq seeks service elsewhere. Indirectly it will be of help to Khaliq's family but it should be clearly stated that it is meant for the girl's education. I do not want this payment of Rs. 10/- a month to be made through Ladli Bhai as this will introduce an element of confusion in his servants' list. I should like you or Feroze to take charge of it and pay Khaliq directly every month or at less frequent intervals. So much for Khaliq & his daughter—I hope I have made myself clear.

As for the rest of the list I have nothing special to say except this that in view of the rise in prices and heavier cost of living whenever it is considered necessary some increments should be made—This requires

no reference to me. I do not want our servants to live in perpetual want or to run up big accounts at the *banias* which they cannot pay off. Nor should we wait for demands from them. The addition of small sums to their salaries or allowances does not make much difference to me but it makes a lot of difference to their lives. Generally speaking, the war has not resulted in any marked increase in wages of unskilled labour, except in some big cities or where war work is being carried on. It has indeed added to the unemployment of casual labour as well as of some classes of domestic servants. Many middle class families who used to keep a number of servants cannot keep them now or have to reduce their number. Hence the market rate of unskilled domestic servants has not risen although prices have gone up tremendously. This puts them in a terrible fix and the alternative to inadequate wages is unemployment. Hence some attention should be paid to prevailing conditions, prices &c. and suitable increments made whenever considered necessary.

Tulsi is not an unskilled worker. He could I suppose command a higher salary elsewhere if he tried for it. It would not be an easy matter for us to get as good a cook at his present salary. I notice that he is not getting any dearness allowance. If, therefore, the question of an increment for him arises, I think it should be favourably considered either in the shape of salary or dearness allowance.

I have not made any specific proposals as it is difficult to do so from here without knowing more about actual conditions. Any change naturally affects other people also. I should therefore like you to put my viewpoint to Ladli Bhai in regard to these monthly salaries and leave it to him to give effect to it whenever he thinks it desirable—No reference to me is necessary for such increments.

About pensions. I am glad Bhola is getting 20/-. If, because of illness, he wants some extra help, you should always give it. But this has nothing to do with his monthly allowance and need not be referred to Ladli Bhai. It will be occasional help.

Abul Hasan is another very old servant—engaged long before I was born—He must be pretty old now. I think his pension should be increased from Rs. 10/- to Rs. 15/-. He has only a few years to live and I should like to give him some comfort in his old age. He has a patch of land also from which he earns something.

Some of the pensioners, it appears, get trivial and rather absurd sums, for instance the old *Bhishti*, Jumna, Behari's mother and Asghar Ali's wife or widow. They are all old and feeble and incapable of work—They should be given something more: thus the *Bhishti*+3=8/-; Jumna+2=9/-; Behari's mother+3=6/-; Asghar Ali's wife+3=7/-.

These increments in pensions (Abul Hasan's and others) should be included in Ladli Bhai's list.

Wahid's son, I notice, gets Rs. 10/- a month. This was fixed more than ten years ago for his educational expenses. He ought to be earning money now. But the family was a large one and possibly still requires help. Anyway some inquiry might be made. Ask Feroze to inquire from Muzaffar Husain of Allahabad. Muzaffar knows the family well.

I was very glad to learn from your letter that *Puphi's* testamentary affairs have been settled out of court. *Puphi* has so far not written to me about this.

The honey you sent is very good. The best I have had here.

I think I wrote to you that I have received Eve Curie's *Journey among Warriors*. Also Kate Mitchell's *India*. Yesterday I got some books sent by Betty: *The Trial of Mussolini*⁵¹³ by Cassius; Tendulkar's *Thirty Months in Russia*⁵¹⁴ in Hindi & Marathi, and L.C. Jain's *Indian Economy during the War*.⁵¹⁵

You might note down the following books which are worth getting:

- 1) Leland Stowe's: *They Shall Not Sleep*.
- 2) Agnes Smedley's latest book about China: *The Battle Hymn of China*.
- 3) H.J. Laski: *Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time*.
- 4) Khwaja Ahmad Abbas: *And One Did Not Come Back*.
(Bombay) (About our medical mission to China)

It is quite likely that Abbas will send me his new book. He usually sends them.

I am glad Bapu is progressing. I quite agree with Jivraj and Gilder about the nature cure place. Quite apart from the virtues of nature cure, I could never go to a place which is called a 'Healthatorium'. I visited the place once and was not impressed.

I wrote to *Nani* a few days ago to Lahore.

Love

Your loving
Papu

513. An imaginary trial of Mussolini by a British court and jury. He was found guilty of being an enemy of the human race and a chief criminal responsible for the war.

514. It deals with the social and economic transformation of Russia and describes scenes of Soviet life as observed by the author in 1937.

515. The text of the author's six lectures delivered at the University of Patna in 1942.

June 26, Monday

My blood pressure today 125 Systolic; 83 Diastolic; 42 Pulse pressure.

July 1. 1944

Darling Indu,

I have your letters dated 21st and 22nd June—Nos. 69 & 70. It is extraordinary how casual people are. Jivraj is a methodical and careful person who can be relied upon to do a job he has undertaken. And yet even he seems to have suffered from a lapse. As for Purandare I hardly expected any kind of smartness from him. He is good at his work but his looks and ways of dealing with his patients give little comfort. I hope that you have fixed up everything during your visit to Bombay. I do not know Shirodkar⁵¹⁶ — never heard of him. That of course is not against him for my knowledge and experience of the world of doctors and surgeons is strictly limited. Obviously in a city like Bombay there must be many competent gynaecologists. Purandare is good and experienced but he is not the only one. The main thing to do is to fix up definitely with someone and have the assurance that you can refer to him whenever necessary.

It certainly will not be right for you to return to Allahabad for the confinement. Not that I think badly of the facilities available in Allahabad. But obviously Bombay offers many additional facilities and it is safer to be near these. You have already spent some months round about there and it is worthwhile continuing for another two months or so. There is really nothing to worry about. Your present health is excellent and this is the basic factor. For the rest one should take every precaution during these months and not worry. It is Purandare's casualness that must be irritating. If something definite is fixed up then you simply carry on normally and almost forget about doctors. During the seventh month some extra care is usually called for. Do not worry about the extra expense. Often that saves trouble and expense later.

I was amused to learn that Raja had entrusted himself to Bapu's care and treatment. I am not particularly enamoured of his methods of treatment and yet there is much in them especially for an asthmatic case like Raja's. I am firmly convinced that one's health depends on

516. Dr. V.N. Shirodkar (1899-1971); a well-known obstetrician and gynaecologist of Bombay; Professor of the Grant Medical College, Bombay, 1935-55.

one's way of living, food, exercise, mental occupations &c. far more than on medicine, though medicine is certainly useful occasionally. Bombay flat life is far removed from any natural life—it is cut off from nature, fresh air and exercise—and there is a tendency to lounge about. But then, as you say, Raja is so used to this existence in a Bombay flat that he feels bored elsewhere. The change ought to do him good if he can stand it.

I should like to have news of Rafi Ahmad⁵¹⁷ and Raghunandan Saran. Both have been ill for a long time. Could you ask Feroze to find out?

Mahmud's son, Said, has been unwell for some time and some lung trouble is suspected. He has recently gone to Bhowali though whether he will stay there or not for any length of time I do not know. I can understand Hamida not answering your letter for she must feel shy about writing in English. As a matter of fact she can write rather broken and incorrect English. Said has been eager to get Hogben's book—*Mathematics for the Million*—and ever since he has heard that I am having it sent to him, he has repeatedly enquired about it. I am therefore surprised at his not answering your letter. Perhaps there was some delay in the letter reaching him. I think you might send the book to him to the Chapra address, that is if it is convenient for you. If the book is lying about somewhere in Allahabad and you cannot easily reach it, then do not trouble yourself over it. Better give a full address: Said-ur-Rahman, Dr. Syed Mahmud's house, Haque Manzil, Chapra, B.N.W. Ry.—Bihar.

It will be a good thing if you can get that very wonderful nurse and midwife whom Aryanayakam⁵¹⁸ recommends. He is a fairly good judge.

I have glanced through Eve Curie's book—read about 50 pages at the beginning and the chapter about her visit to Anand Bhawan. I rather liked it and am going to carry on with it. It is of course just good reporting but that reporting is done well. She writes smoothly and has the knack of observing little things which help to make a picture vivid. Being a reporter's account the book is likely to date. Perhaps I like the book because I rather liked her and then she has so many nice things to say about me! The personal touch counts.

I am surprised at your asking me how I get my foreign periodicals. I was under the impression that they were all sent to Anand Bhawan

517. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai was arrested on 12 May 1942 under the D.I.R. and had since been kept in the Bareilly Central Prison.

518. E.W. Aryanayakam, of Sri Lanka, was secretary to Rabindranath Tagore for some time and later an associate of Mahatma Gandhi; worked in the Hindustani Talimi Sangh at Wardha; died in 1968.

and then forwarded, *via* the Bombay Secretariat, to me. I cannot tell how they come as they reach me without their covers. Once a *Reader's Digest* arrived with a cover and I was a little surprised to notice that it was addressed to me C/o Home Department, Government of Bombay. I wondered how the *Reader's Digest* people got hold of this address. Probably, I thought, Walsh had given it. Walsh has fixed up with all these American periodicals on my behalf. That is convenient for me as he can pay the subscriptions out of my royalties, if he has any. It is possible that he has given the Bombay Govt.'s address to all of them. I am getting quite a number, though many numbers are missing, and I do not get them in proper order. I have been getting *Life*, *Time*, *Foreign Affairs*, *Pacific Affairs*, *Asia* (odd numbers), *Reader's Digest*, *Nation*, *New Republic*, *Amerasia*. There are also other odd papers which come to me without my having subscribed to them—such as *The Jewish Frontier*. I have never read so many American periodicals more or less regularly before, because I could not afford the time.

Does Feroze get *Fortune* and do you get another copy of *Asia*?

The three books you mention—one sent by Pan for me—might be forwarded to me.

I have been reading in the English papers references to the books of L. H. Myers⁵¹⁹ who died recently. Two of his books are especially commended. These are novels dealing with Akbar's time in India. That is an interesting period and I should like to read these books. Probably you will not be able to get them—they were published originally round about 1940 & 1941. However I am giving these names for you to note them:

L. H. Myers	:	<i>The Root and the Flower</i>
—Do—	:	<i>The Pool of Vishnu</i>

Bombay has no doubt larger and better bookshops than other places but Poona has a place—The International Book Depot, or some such name—which often keeps books not available elsewhere.

I think you are right in not encouraging Rupa or Bappi to come for your confinement. That would mean trouble for them and no advantage to you.

519. (1881-1944); a philosophical novelist. *The Root and the Flower* deals with the corruption of the worldly and the false intellectual and *The Pool of Vishnu* contends that in every man there is a will to spiritual life and a touch of honesty in his motives.

We have had some rain again after a long gap.
Love

Your loving
Bapu

This is my letter No. 68.

4.7.1944⁵²⁰

Darling Betty,

Indu writes to me that Raja and you are taking the children to the Gwalior School and will probably go to Delhi from there. I don't exactly know where you are going and perhaps this letter will miss you. I think you have decided wisely about the children. Both for their health and mental development the companionship of other children, the discipline of school life, and plenty of open air and games will be good, I wish I could see Harsha and Ajit now. They must have grown and changed so much during the last two years. Give them my love and tell them that when I come back I am looking forward to seeing them bright and healthy and strong.

I was amused to learn that Raja has put himself under Bapu's treatment or rather his general direction about the nature-cure method. That was a brave step to take but it was a wise one for Raja. I am not exactly a faddist about nature-cure and I certainly do not advise many of those who carry these methods to extreme limits. But I do believe in allowing natural methods full play and putting one's body in tune with nature, in so far as this can be done in present circumstances. Our lives tend to grow more and more artificial and many of our ailments are due to our manner of living. Obviously we cannot go back to the jungle or the field but we can try to make some adjustments which help in restoring our bodily equilibrium. I imagine a course of nature-cure treatment will do good to Raja. It will be boring but it should not be difficult for Raja to stick to it for some weeks. Asthma ought to be peculiarly susceptible to this treatment.

I have received a number of books, some from you and some from Indu. I can't make out which ones were sent by you and which came

520. File No: 3590/H/II-2, Maharashtra Government Records; Police Commissioner's Office.

from Indu, as they all reach me in a mixed bundle. Probably the following came from you:—

Eve Curie : *Journey among Warriors*

Kate Mitchell : *India*

The Trial of Mussolini by Cassius

Tendulkar's book on Russia in Marathi and Hindi

L. C. Jain—*Indian Economy during the War*

Thank you for sending them—I have not been reading much lately, that is books. Foreign periodicals come in large numbers now and they take up a good deal of time. Also I have been doing some writing work. 50 books have accumulated. I shall go back to them soon.

Are you going to Delhi? You will meet many of our friends there. Give them my love.

I am anxious to know how Raghunandan Saran is getting on. He has been ill for some years now and this business of having a weak heart or whatever it is, is very loathsome and persistent. I do not know where Nandan is but I suppose he is in Delhi.

June was a dry month here, more or less. There has been some rain during the last few days.

Love to you and Raja. I hope you are keeping well.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

July 5. Wednesday

We have now read most of the correspondence that passed between Bapu and the Govt. Not quite all yet as the newspapers have not given everything. A full cyclostyled record has reached Vallabhbhai but I have not read it so far. My first impressions confirmed. Generally a feeling of satisfaction but mixed with occasional irritation—Why should it be necessary to have to explain what he said and wrote previously—and at such great length? Because of nonviolence and the metaphysical aspects of satyagraha, a certain almost theological element of casuistry creeps in sometimes.

But this approach apart, Bapu has done a good job and he had laboured hard at it. He has cleared many cobwebs and explained his own thinking and action. In that thinking there is that inevitable tug-of-war between moral considerations and practical problems, and occasionally there is a contradiction which cannot be resolved, at least by me.

But such contradictions are, I suppose, inherent in life's problems. What appears odd to us is his manner of approach.

Suppose he had been as explicit in 1942 as he is now—what a lot of difference this might have made! Not that he has said anything new. Much of all this he had told us previously but the public did not know it. It is after all a question of emphasis.

By this correspondence and his last letter⁵²¹ to Wavell, he has made it very clear how anxious he is to have a settlement, and yet he has stuck to his fundamentals. Wavell's refusal to meet him is now so obviously wrong from any point of view except the imperialist one of crushing Congress, that reactions in India & abroad are bound to be against it.

The position is that the Congress has been cleared of many false charges and the basic conflict between nationalism & imperialism has been brought to the surface. That cannot be resolved just yet and practical solutions are hardly possible now.

We carry on in our respective prisons and detention camps. Probably the next three weeks will clear up the situation even more and Bapu may be back in prison—Yet somehow I cannot see this kind of thing continuing for long.

Yesterday my weight was 130 lbs. I have been going up slowly—Incidentally yesterday's weighment was the hundredth since we came here—

I am carrying on with my writing work. Have reached the Mutiny period—p. 558 of the MSS. I fear this is growing longer than it should. I wanted it to be more concise. It seems that I shall reach p. 750 or so before I end it here—and then I might add to it on discharge.

July 8, 1944

Darling Indu,

I have had no letter from you since I wrote last, but that was almost expected as you had gone to Bombay. I hope everything was fixed up satisfactorily there.

521. Dated 9 April 1943, it stated: "... in dealing with Congressmen and others, the Government have combined the prosecutor, judge and jailor in the same person and this made proper defence impossible on the part of the accused... India today is one vast prison containing four hundred million souls. You are its sole custodian. The Government prisons are prisons within this prison. Unless there is a change of heart, view, and policy on the part of the Government I am quite content to remain your prisoner."

Tomorrow is a kind of special day for us here. We complete one hundred weeks—700 days—and incidentally twenty three months. It so happens that is Sunday also, the day we arrived here. These round figures somehow fix special and red-letter days, although they have no particular importance, for every day is more or less alike.

We have a little rain occasionally, not much, but enough to keep us cool. There has been a lack of rain this season. I hope this does not apply to other parts of the country, for bad crops would mean a terrible addition to starvation and misery.

There are some books which I want to return but they are not likely to interest you—for instance Mullick's book on philosophy. Instead of sending them to you it would be better if they were sent direct to Anand Bhawan. Who shall I address them to? Feroze or Ladli Bhai?

Puphi has sent me photographs of Chand and Tara and Betty has sent pictures of Harsha and Ajit. They are all good.

This letter is a brief one for a change, and for this relief you will no doubt feel grateful. It is my No. 69.

Love

From your loving
Papu

July 14. Friday

All manner of dramatic developments have taken place. Gandhiji of course being at the back of them. First came the Rajaji-Jinnah correspondence⁵²²—a stunner, and then Bapu's long statement to the *News Chronicle* correspondent.⁵²³

What have been the reactions of all this on me and on others here? They vary; Maulana has been feeling depressed and annoyed; others

522. In this correspondence published on 10 July 1944, Rajagopalachari put forward a formula that if the Muslim League endorsed the demand for independence and cooperated with the Congress in forming a provisional government during the war, the Congress would agree to a future plan according to which the Muslim majority areas could be demarcated through a plebiscite.

523. On 9 July 1944, Mahatma Gandhi said that he had "no intention of offering civil disobedience today," because that would "embarrass the British Government"; he would be satisfied with a national government in full control of the civil administration "and was interested in seeing the Viceroy with a view to help and not hinder Allied war efforts."

also, or some of them, are put out to some extent, though not much. Some are in the habit of accepting everything that Bapu says or does.

As for me, I liked the bold way in which Bapu has approached both these problems. I dislike his indirect manner; I dislike also some of the details suggested and agreed to by him. On the whole, however, I have not felt any depression as I usually do when things go wrong. Perhaps it is just relief at something having been done to break up the impasse which tied us all up.

Analysing both the proposals on the merits there is nothing basic that I find myself in disagreement with, though I do wish much had been put differently. Anyway, I have been singularly little stirred by these developments. Somehow everything seems small in comparison with the big things to come.

An inevitable thought was : Does this mean an early release for us? This perturbed me. I do not want to go out with my book unfinished. I want another month, preferably six weeks. I am almost sure we shall be here for much longer than this—But still one never knows and so I am giving more time to writing—I have been just three months and a day over it—have written 648 manuscript pages. I am likely to write another 150 pages.

x

x

x

x

Today we all received a fresh order from Govt. confirming our detention. This because six months since the last order ended today, or was it yesterday?

July 15, 1944

Darling Indu,

Yesterday I received your letter No. 71 of the 9th July from Bombay. I hope this letter of mine will reach you in Poona before you leave for Bombay again on the 19th.

Yes, I had news of you from the *Puphis*. I am glad you have fixed up with Shirodkar. As a matter of fact I had come to the conclusion some time ago that Purandare was not satisfactory—not because of the lack of competence for he knows his job, but because of his sloppiness and casualness. I dislike this kind of thing greatly. Perhaps also he is too old to be smart. I did not write this to you as I did not want to interfere with arrangements already made. Now that you have made

new arrangements with Shirodkar I feel much more at ease. It is not clear from your letter whether you propose to return to Poona after each visit to Shirodkar.

I wrote to *Puphi* (the elder one) day before yesterday and, would you believe it?, I dated my letter 20th July instead of the 13th. And this after consulting the calendar! I remembered that it was Thursday and just skipped a week. This shows how one loses the sense of time in prison. A mistake of a day is frequent enough and normal, but a whole week is very unusual. It can only mean either absorption in work or an approach to dotage.

Another instance. I apply oil rarely to my head—usually about once a fortnight. The other day, in an attempt to do so, I put on a fair quantity of undiluted Dettol to the head! It was only after a little while that I discovered something was wrong. Again, later I reversed the process and put some oil in a tumbler of water for the purpose of gargling! Pretty bad, isn't it? Though not quite as bad as it looks for I keep the two in very small unlabelled phials and a mistake is possible. Still I was put out by this succession of lapses. I remembered reading in an American magazine recently about a chaplain who began to forget little things he had to do. He could not remember the number of the prescribed hymn in chapel; he forgot some engagements. Thinking that he might be suffering from overstrain, he consulted his doctor. There was apparently nothing wrong. However the investigation proceeded, various X-ray photographs were taken, and a faint shadow or some other indication was noticed in the region of the brain. It was decided to operate and the beginnings of a small tumour were removed. He recovered rapidly and got back his memory; there were no further lapses.

All this does not mean that I am suffering from a softening of the brain or any other ailment. I think my mind and brain are in very good condition, and as for my body it is as fit as it has ever been. I continue my exercises & especially the *asans* and breathing ones. I am convinced that, short of accidents and deep mental shock, physical health can be maintained by anyone who cares to do so and has some sense and knowledge of the body.

Some days ago I received three bottles of Mahabaleshwar honey either from you or from Betty. It looks good and is rather swanky as each bottle bears the name of a different flower—rose, *akara*, *pangla*. What is the *akara* and the *pangla*? I do not know them. But I had a shock when I noticed the price marked on one of the bottles. This is Rs. 7/4 and the bottle is a small one, not containing more than 1½ lb. It is scandalous paying so much for honey, especially in these days. Please do

not send any more at this or like price. Tell Betty also. Anyway this honey will last us a long time as we use it with all due care and reverence.

I am sorry Raja had a relapse. This combination of asthma and other ailments is very troublesome. A course of treatment that may do good to one of them, may at the same time be injurious to the other. The only thing to do is build up bodily resistance. Even that is made difficult by repeated attacks of asthma.

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 70.

July 22, 1944

Darling Indu,

I have your letter No. 72 dated 15th July from Poona. I suppose you have paid your second visit to Shirodkar in Bombay and returned to Poona—Hence this letter goes to Poona—I intend sending you a few books on Monday next. Among these there will be two or three of Betty's which you can return to her. They bear her name.

The six new books that you have sent have not yet reached me—I suppose they will come in the ordinary course. Meanwhile, a bundle of Communist literature has been sent to me by Puran Chand Joshi. There are two or three books and a large number of pamphlets—some published in Moscow, some in Bombay. They deal mostly with the war in Russia. Will you convey my thanks to Joshi if you can get in touch with him. Altogether I have received 21 books and pamphlets from him.

Mention of books reminds me that August 18th is *bari Puphi's* birthday. I should like you to choose a number of good books as a birthday gift to her on my behalf. Of course if you can choose a more suitable present for her, do so by all means. My mind runs to books only.

I like de la Mare's poem which you have sent me. Amazingly musical he is and imaginative, living on the borderland of fact and fantasy, with a secret nostalgic longing for some elusive feeling or emotion. I like him not only because of his good writing but also because he

evokes sympathetic responses in me. I feel in tune with him and his mood—and that, I suppose, is as good a test as any of successful writing. His lines linger in the memory and often take one out of the present into a world of imaginative existence.

I know Barbara Hartland quite well—that is to say I have seen her many times during the past seven or eight years. She used to work in the Friends' Hospital in Itarsi and whenever I passed through Itarsi, and that was pretty often, she was almost always at the station to meet me. I did not send her any previous intimation of my passing through, but she managed to find out about it. When going to Wardha we had to change at Itarsi and spend some hours there. Someone from the station usually went and informed the Friends' Hospital people and Barbara and sometimes others also tramped up at the station. On several occasions I went and had a bath and a meal at their house. She is a very earnest, enthusiastic kind of person, as Quakers often are, and a hard worker. I think you have decided rightly in not asking her to leave her present work. To run a children's home in Bengal is just the kind of work she will do well and it would be a pity to draw her away

I suppose you saw the eclipse of the sun last Thursday. It was a bad day, cloudy and with an occasional drizzle of rain. But we managed to have many glimpses of the crescent sun looking like a two-day-old moon. At least 90% or possibly even 95% of the sun's disc was covered at the height of the eclipse. Because of the clouds there was no sudden darkening as usually occurs during such eclipses, leading to much consternation among the birds. I remember almost a total eclipse which I saw when I was a small boy—probably 11 or 12 years old. The total eclipse took place some distance away from Allahabad, at Buxar in Behar, and many scientists and astronomers went there from all parts of the world. Such a total eclipse lasts only a second or two but that fraction of time is rather unique, for the whole disc of the sun is covered and some kind of rays and emanations emerge from the edges. Einstein's theory of the curvature of light rays, mathematically arrived at, was confirmed by observation and photographs of a total eclipse of the sun. This took place in Java I think. Sometimes, it so happens, that all the big astronomers foregather at the appointed place, ready with their instruments and special cameras, all tensely waiting for that mystic second, and then a cloud floats by and covers the sun and the moon and makes observation impossible. Rather like those tensely expected moments in life when we hope for so much, and then the moment comes and passes and life has eluded us again. The gods laugh making fun of the petty hopes and ambitions of poor mortals.

I presume now with the development of aircraft and helicopters, it should be possible to overcome this disability of clouds screening the sun at the right moment.

One rather odd and unexpected thing we saw during the eclipse. This was a huge, faintly rainbow-like halo round the sun, making a perfect circle. I suppose this effect was due to the rain-laden clouds.

The Chinese tea you have sent will be welcome. It is a pleasant change and a diversion for us with its golden colour and soothing aroma and faint but delightful taste. Over a year ago *bari Puphi* sent me a large packet which had come from China. We used it sparingly, once a week on a specially appointed day, after dinner and made it last nearly a year. It brought us memories of other places and other days.

I am glad Bul is out and is looking well and as smart as ever. Give her my love. Why has Mridu not profited by her stay in Kashmir? I think she worries too much.

Our garden has been neglected for many months; chiefly my fault as my mind turned to other things. We have now put in a number of seedlings suitable for the rainy season. Probably by the end of August they will flower.

Love

Your loving
Papu

I am returning the dividend warrant for Rs. 40/- after endorsement. You can send this on to Bachhraj.

This is my letter No. 71.

P

26.7.1944

Darling Betty,

I have had two letters from you since I wrote last. They are dated 3rd and 14th July, the latter from New Delhi. Meanwhile, Raja and you have been to Gwalior and put the boys at school there. The first few days after you left them must have been hard for you and them. And yet, if the school is of the right sort, they will soon adapt themselves to their new surroundings and get used to a wider cooperative life than they could have in the pleasanter but more restricted life of home.

Children adapt themselves easily, it is only grown-ups who find some difficulty in doing so. For a sensitive boy like Harsha the change, though harder to begin with, is perhaps more beneficial. For otherwise the real change from homelife, which comes inevitably at a later stage, is more difficult to bear. So many of our children, used to homelife only, become rather unfitted for the rough and tumble of the world and have to suffer for this. Education must provide a gradual transition to wider spheres of activity and new experiences. Intellectual training, important enough, cannot take the place of this growth through personal experience of others. There is another advantage. Home then becomes a place to look forward to, a sanctum where one can retire from time to time, and not merely a normal background which one takes for granted. The alternation of home and school helps to create a balance, one setting off the other.

I was happy to get the brief letters from Harsha and Ajit. I would write to them myself but each such letter counts and we may write only two a week. So, for the present, I am not writing but I may do so later. Tell them that I liked their letters and am pleased that they are at the Gwalior School. Tell them also that I went to school far away from home, so far that I could not even come back home during my holidays. I met many new people in school, made friends and learnt to look after myself. I became healthy and strong of body and that is why I keep well now. They must also become strong and healthy and know how to look after themselves and others. It is nearly two years since I have seen them and when we meet next they will have to tell me about their school life, what they do there, what games they play, what friends they have made. And then I shall tell them of my school days.

Harsha's and Ajit's photographs reached me some time ago. They are good and each brings out the nature of the boy. Harsha is pensive, introspective; Ajit a bit of an extrovert, as boys should be, and full of self-confidence.

Now that the boys have gone to school, what have you done with Agnes?⁵²⁴

Harsha, in his letter, says that in December "we might go to Agra or Kashmir"! Is this just a slip of the pen or have you actually thought of going to Kashmir in winter? It is lovely there always and I like winter and snow. But I cannot imagine Raja enjoying himself in a temperature below zero.

524. A nurse.

Indu, I suppose, is in Bombay now and staying on there. My last letter to her was addressed to Poona. A parcel of books, containing some of yours and Raja's, was sent to her care of you.

I was glad to have news of Badshah Khan, Khan Sahib and Yunus. Send my love to Yunus when you write to him.

Love to you and Raja.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

July 29, 1944

Darling Indu,

My last letter was sent to the Poona address. After I had despatched it I got yours of the 19th July—No. 73—in which you say that you intended staying on in Bombay.

I have received the following books from you:

- 1 *Mathematical Recreations* by M. Kraitchik
- 2 Hogben : *Interglossa*
- 3 Nym Wales : *New China*
- 4 Osbert Lancaster : *More Pocket Cartoons*
- 5 *Beatrice the Ballerina*
- 6 *New Kashmir*
- 7 *Correspondence with Mr. Gandhi* (Govt. publication)
and I have sent you to Bombay:
- 1 Carl Crow : *The Story of Confucius*
- 2 Croce : *History as the Story of Liberty*
- 3 Mullick : *The Real & the Negative*
- 4 -Do- : *The Individual & the Group*
- 5 Thompson : *The Making of the Indian Princes*
- 6 Burchett : *Wingate's Phantom Army*
- 7 Koestler : *Arrival & Departure*
- 8 Brock : *The Mountains Wait*
- 9 Ilya Ehrenburg : *Russia at War*
- 10 Karaka : *Chungking Diary*
- 11 -Do- : *We Never Die*
- 12 *Colour Bar*
- 13 Beverly Nichols : *The Living & the Dead*
- 14 Mead & Chattopadhyaya : *The Upanishads*

- 15 Gibran : *The Prophet*
- 16 Agarwala : *Hindu-Muslim Riots*
- 17 Tendulkar : रुस में ३० महीने. In Hindi
- 18 *Merchant Seamen and the War*: I.L.O.

And I.L.O. Review—*Visva-Bharati* & other periodicals &c. A separate bundle of periodicals has also been sent. The following further books &c. are now being sent :

- 19 Louis Fischer : *A Week with Gandhi*
- 20 Eve Curie : *Journey among Warriors*
- 21 *Beatrice the Ballerina*
- 22 Lancaster : *More Pocket Cartoons*
- 23 Kate Mitchell : *India*
- 24 *Mudra-Rakshasa*

And *Hindusthan Quarterly* & *Visva-Bharati*.

I liked the two books of cartoons. Several of these books are Betty's—Please return them to her.

Eve Curie's book was not so good as I expected it to be. It is diffused and too much of day-to-day reporting. But it makes interesting reading, especially the part dealing with Russia. Wingate's *Phantom Army* has a brief reference towards the end to Moti Kathju. He died just when they were on the point of reaching India on their way back.

I decided, not without an effort, to read Karaka's books. How astonishingly silly he is. His ideas about most things are peculiar but his knowledge of Indian conditions is fantastic. He means well I suppose and so I am prepared to take an indulgent view, but why write when there is such awful emptiness in the mind and ignorance of subject? Probably he would be in his element if he wrote about Bombay racing or nightclubs.

If you want to give an average person a headache commend to him Benedetto Croce's book. It is full of learning and thought and makes the reader think also. But what a jumble of semi-metaphysical speculations and ideas about history—after condemning metaphysics and the like. I am glad I read it but it was no easy journey.

You are right about our changing views of age. These really derive from an important psychological truth. We are always apt to make ourselves the measure of things—almost all things. As individuals we judge others by our own standards—physical, mental, moral. If we are tall, others appear short and stumpy. If we succeed in life we are likely to consider those who do not as fools or inefficient. Nationally, we are equally apt to consider our country as the standard of measurement and other countries appear odd and foolish. Our religion, our philosophy, our ways of life—everything seems natural and in the

proper order of things because we have been used to them from our childhood. In the old days, when communications were very limited, this exclusiveness was much more marked and there was a strong tendency to consider all foreigners as barbarians because their ways were different. The Chinese, the old Indians, the Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Iranians always referred to foreigners as barbarians, as people living outside the pale of real civilization. Now that process has been reversed and the Europeans and Americans, because of their obvious material progress, are convinced that they are the elect and others are backward races, decadent or rather primitive. Within the European group, each country considers itself the chosen one and the others not so favoured. Travel and contacts with other countries and peoples help a little to get over this narrowness, but not much, for each individual and group has an amazing capacity to live in its own shell, and the barriers of the mind are much harder to get over physical differences. And so we are all apt to spot the mote in the other's eye and ignore the beam in our own.

I was amused to read about the मूर्ति. It will be welcome in Anand Bhawan and can sit on its old perch in the peepal tree for as long as it likes. The tree itself is a very old one and shows definite signs of age, but it will anyway survive all of us.

I had a note two days ago from *Puphi* from Calcutta. The news she gave me about Mehr Taj's engagement shocked me. I had read about this—or was it her marriage?—in some newspaper but I knew nothing about the other party. Vaguely the name was familiar and I thought he might be Yunus's elder brother,⁵²⁵ one of them. It struck me then that, if so, there must be a considerable difference in age between the two. Also that it was hardly likely that he was still a bachelor; perhaps he was a widower. But all this was guesswork and I knew nothing about it for certain. I did not like it as I felt sure that Mehr Taj would probably not fit in. Anyway it was no business of mine. Now *Puphi* writes that she has heard from some common friend that Mehr Taj's fiance is 55 years old and is already married. Whether he belongs to Yunus's family or not, she does not say. This information, if true, does make matters much worse and I am greatly put out. *Puphi* is much agitated and has written to Ghani and others.

You asked me about our garden. I must tell you about an entirely private affair of my own—a kind of window decoration. This is not a window-box, but a creeper growing out of a bottle. I do not know

525. Yahya Khan who settled in Pakistan after the partition of India.

the name of the creeper. It has green leaves with yellowish white patches. No flowers so far. It grows at the rate of about a foot a month. I have had it now for over six months and it goes right across my window and back again, trained along thin pieces of string. It is a delightful decoration for a window. At first the leaves were small and the growth rather slow. Then I started adding a fertiliser-tablet to the water in the bottle and immediately the leaves doubled in size and developed a richer colour. Three or four-inch-long aerial roots are now coming out. I change the water of the bottle once a week.

Here are the names of two books which you might note down for purchase when they are available:

*Indigo*⁵²⁶ by Christine Weston (Collins, London 10/6). This is a novel about India.

*The Mirror of the Past*⁵²⁷ by K. Zilliacus (Gollancz 7/6).

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 72.

August 5, 1944 Saturday

Three weeks since I wrote last in this journal. Three weeks of growing perturbation and mental distress. I wrote then that I was not put out at all by various developments and the two proposals Bapu had made, though I disagreed with much that he had said and the manner of saying and doing. Well, I take all that back. I am very much put out, angered and out of temper. The floods of statements, interviews,

526. The book gives an account of how the son of a French indigo planter and his two friends—the son of an Indian barrister and the son of a British army officer—who met in the “innocence and generosity of childhood” and were drawn into different paths of life, moved in increasing misunderstanding at cross purposes. The story brings out the clash of western and eastern ideas in India.

527. *The Mirror of the Past: Let it Reflect the Future*. The book seeks to show from the history of the foreign policy of the great powers, especially Britain, from 1900 to 1930, the danger of international anarchy and to stress the need for a world government.

correspondence &c that have emanated from Bapu,⁵²⁸ and the very frequent utterances⁵²⁹ of Rajagopalachari, have overwhelmed me and others and I feel stifled and unable to breathe normally. For the first time in these two years I have a sensation of blankness and sinking of heart. Today I have been writing to Indu my usual Saturday letter. I found some difficulty in doing so and could hardly finish my sentences.

Jinnah with his insolence has contributed to this,⁵³⁰ and so the debate⁵³¹ in the House of Commons and the general attitude of the British press⁵³².—But after all that is to be expected. It is Bapu's response to all this that bowls me over.

X

X

X

X

My mind goes back: the conflicts in the Working Committee in 1936-37—that revealing incident after the Calcutta A.I.C.C. in 1937 (Oct. ?) when Bapu completely lost control over himself over the Mysore resolution and cursed us as mischief-makers—the Rajkot incident when he fasted and then made a mess of everything—that 'inner voice' business—my attempts at resignation from the Congress presidentship and later the W.C.—Tripuri and after—the Calcutta A.I.C.C. again when I

528. In response to the Viceroy's demand for a "definite and constructive policy," Mahatma Gandhi declared in a letter on 27 July 1944 that he was prepared to advise the Working Committee to renounce civil disobedience and to give full cooperation in the war effort if independence was declared immediately and a national government responsible to Central Legislature was formed, subject to the condition that during the war, military operation might continue without the financial burden on India. He followed this with an appeal to the British Prime Minister, "to trust and use me for the sake of your people and through them those of the world."

529. In his statements during July and August 1944, Rajagopalachari answered the critics of his scheme for a communal settlement by emphasising that the only alternative would be the perpetuation of British rule.

530. In his address to the Muslim League Council on 30 July 1944 and later in a press conference, Jinnah denied that the Rajagopalachari formula had met his demand. He described it "as offering only a maimed, mutilated and moth-eaten Pakistan and thus trying to pass off as having met the Pakistan scheme and Muslim demand".

531. In the debate on 26 July 1944, Amery said that the British Government would not reopen formal negotiations with the Indian nationalists on the issue of independence, or on the basis of Mahatma Gandhi's proposals.

532. *The Times* wrote: "No agreement between Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Jinnah, however satisfactory to their adherents, can materially advance political progress in India unless it takes into account the depressed classes... the claims of the princes..." *The Manchester Guardian* declared: "Indian nationalist leaders, whatever their declared policies might be, cannot be trusted with any share in the government of India."

got out of the W.C.—September 1939 when the war began and I reverted to the W.C.—the War Sub-Committee of which I was chairman which never functioned!—the conflicts over nonviolence—the breaks with Bapu and subsequent reconciliations—Ramgarh Congress and after—Individual C.D.—Bardoli—December 1941—the Chiangs' visit and Bapu's reaction to them—Stafford Cripps—the Allahabad A.I.C.C. April-May 1942—another Bapu's amazing series of articles in *Harijan*—the passion which seemed to envelop him—and so on to August 8, 1942.

And now? All these explanations without end and toning down of everything—this grovelling before the Viceroy & Jinnah—This may be the satyagraha technique. If so, I fear I do not fit in at all—It does not even possess the saving grace of dignity—Tall talk and then excuses & explanations and humility.

What I may do outside after our release, I do not know. But I feel that I must break with this woolly thinking and undignified action—which really means breaking with Gandhi. I have at present no desire even to go to him on release and discuss matters with him—What do such discussions lead to? I suppose I shall see him anyhow.....

As for Rajagopalachari—is there a more dangerous person in all India?

x

x

x

x

Last night I created quite a disturbance by my shouting in my sleep—I woke up about half a dozen people—At last Kripalani came way down from his place to wake me and put me right.

August 5, 1944

Darling Indu,

I have your letter No. 74 of July 27th.

With the coming of August there has been a subtle change in the weather—It is cooler and fans are no longer needed. We have little rain now and the sky is often brilliantly clear. I suppose Bombay is close and unpleasant and next month there is likely to be worse. It is a pity you have to be there during these months. But then there is no help for it.

The Chinese tea reached me some time ago. I hope you or someone thanked the Shen Shih-huas for it. We have not tried it yet. It is being preserved for a special occasion—The occasion will soon be with us—August 9th, the second anniversary of our coming here—

That very expensive honey you sent is not particularly good. The previous consignment, which you yourself extracted from the comb, was far better.

So you did not see the eclipse of the sun. You did not miss much, and yet one likes to see these unusual occurrences and they become landmarks in the dull routine of our lives. I do not believe in most taboos, certainly not in those associated with eclipses, and my own tendency is to break them—But if one feels that way it is best to avoid doing anything which is associated in our minds with ill-luck. Betty, or Chitti as you call her, seems to attach considerable importance to taboos. I should have thought that there was so much misfortune and ill-luck in the world that anything that we might or might not do would make little difference. The world certainly will not be affected, but it is true that we ourselves might be affected by our own beliefs and apprehensions.

I am sorry you are having difficulty in obtaining the most ordinary necessities. It is scandalous that you should have to pay Rs. 35/- for the nipples for a baby's feeding bottle. The black market. I suppose, is a symbol of much that is black and dark and gloomy.

It seems rather absurd to try to control prices in such a way so as to drive those articles from the open market and force a person either to do without them or to pay outrageous prices for them. I see in the newspapers huge long lists of articles with their controlled prices marked opposite their names. I suppose that means that those articles have disappeared and lie somewhere hidden for secret sale. What is the black market? The same persons, I presume, who sell goods in public.

I hope you will remember to send a birthday gift on my behalf to *bari Puphi* for August 18th.

After your confinement if all goes well, as I am sure it will, how long will you have to stay in Bombay? I suppose about three or four weeks. Bombay has horrid weather in October and the sooner you get out of the place the better. Allahabad will be delightful then.

I was glad to have news of Rafi. I am very fond of him and admire him in many ways—

I am at present reading, for the second time, Tolstoy's *War and Peace*. I read it first I think about twenty years ago. It is a mighty book both in size and content. War and Peace—war, one can understand though one may regret it, peace one hopes for and dreams about. But this world and all of us seem to drift into a strange condition which is neither war nor peace—a kind of unreal existence in an unreal world. It reminds me of the story of Trishanku in old Indian mythology. Trishanku having become very powerful wanted to storm the citadel of the gods. The gods, as is their way, got frightened and were unable

to check him. So they went to higher powers and sought their help. The result was that they succeeded in stopping Trishanku but could not wholly defeat him or send him back. So old Trishanku hung between heaven and earth, and there I suppose he is still suspended.

Love

Your loving
Papu

August 12. 1944

Darling Indu,

I have your letter No. 75 of August 2nd.

Since writing to you last week we have celebrated the second anniversary of our arrival here. Two years! A big part of one's life concentrated in one place—the same people, the same surroundings, the same routine.

Gradually one fits into it and all that has happened previously becomes a distant memory, rather unreal, a vague stretch with a number of prominent landmarks. There is a sensation of seeing things in a dream, but which is the dream, the present or the past, one does not quite know. For the present also has a certain dream-like quality, an absence of sharp outlines, something that one cannot fully grasp. This present will also fade away some day and then the other dream will become the reality of the moment. So we live two lives like those who have developed split personalities and jump from one life to another. When the next jump comes for me I shall take sometime to wake up to the new life.

We had the Chinese tea you sent us as part of our celebration. It was different from the previous lot which *Puphi* had sent last year and not so good. That had been chrysanthemum tea and we had got used to its gentle flavour and soothing effect. I suppose this present lot is the usual kind of Chinese tea—You need not send any more of it for the present tin will last sometime.

This is your last month and I suppose you will find it a little trying and your mind will be in a state of expectation. It is curious how the most normal and ordinary processes of life are so full of mystery. So many things happen daily which we take for granted and which are yet very odd when we start thinking about them. Each individual is a mysterious person living in a private universe of his own, different from the world other people live in. Is it ever possible for one person ever

truly to understand another? But few people ever worry themselves about such everyday matters and everyone thinks that his world is the only possible world and all others are deviations due to cussedness, knavery or just simple ignorance—And yet when we come face to face with the beginning of a life or the ending of one, suddenly we find ourselves peering into the dark unknown—How little we really know? Death too for all its effect passes and becomes a memory. But new life is an amazing, fascinating thing, full of the wonder of existence, of change and growth, and so always the process of giving birth to anything vital has been the most tremendous fact of existence in this world, for because of that the world continues in spite of the hateful instincts of man. The pain that sometimes accompanies it becomes trivial in comparison with the supreme satisfaction of creation.

I read in some newspaper that Feroze was going to Bombay and intends staying there for a month or more. I am glad he is there.

If Bappi is coming to Bombay well and good. In a practical sense she can be of no help. But I knew that Nani would not be happy unless she came herself or sent someone. So it is as well that Bappi is coming—

I have already written to you the names of the books received by me which you had sent. In referring back to one of your previous letters, I find that one book you sent has not reached me—This is Ahmad Abbas's *And One Did Not Come Back*.⁵³³ Probably it was held up by the censor. I am merely mentioning this to you so that you can get back the book from the Bombay Secretariat.

I have not read the *Mission to Moscow*⁵³⁴—But do not trouble to send any more books just yet. I have plenty to carry on with.

I was amused to learn of the banning of the Hebrew translation of the *Auto* in Palestine. Weak nerves evidently are not confined to India.

I have noted the U.P. Govt.'s reply to the inquiry about the surplus money derived from the sale of *Letters* to school students. Rs. 3000 in two years or so means less than 1500/- a year—Probably the amount does not exceed 1000/- a year, or it may be even less. Not much planning is required for this small sum. But these governments move slowly. It is four years now since this arrangement was agreed to and

533. It recounted the story of the five Indian doctors who worked with the Eighth Route Army. The "one who did not come back" was Dr. Dwarkanath Kotnis, who died on 9 December 1942.

534. *Mission to Moscow* by Joseph E. Davies, who was American Ambassador at Moscow (1936-38); it consists of his confidential despatches to Roosevelt and the State Department, supplemented by extracts from diary entries and correspondence both official and personal.

the money has not even been fully realized, much less utilized. Perhaps they had forgotten all about it and your letter came as a reminder. That was why I asked you to write to them. I would prefer substantial help being given to two or three young students rather than very petty sums being distributed among a larger number. However you need take no further steps in the matter.

I hope your search for an ayah will succeed. It will be a nuisance if you cannot find a suitable one—

This is my letter No. 74.

Love to you and Feroze—

Your loving
Papu

I am sending you a bundle of periodicals: *Foreign Affairs*, *Pacific Affairs*—2 *Asia*, *Life* &c.

I have just received your letter of August 7th. Do not worry about rumours—

P

15-8-1944

Darling Bets,

Your letter of the 4th August came a week ago with the two *rakhis*. It is always a delight to get the *rakhi* from you. *Raksha Bandhan* is one of our pleasing festivals which brings not only personal but also historical memories. It is symbolic of so much. Apparently it is not observed to any great extent in Bombay—not nearly as much as in the U.P.

Mahmud was happy to get the *rakhi*. These personal attentions cheer him up tremendously.

I am very glad Raja is feeling much better now.

Send my love to Harsha and Ajit and tell them to write to me all about their school. I read their little articles in the copy of the *Pushpa* you sent me.

I have not read *For Whom the Bell Tolls*,⁵³⁵ though I have read much about it. I should like to read it. For the present, however, perhaps you had better not send it as I have accumulated a large number of books.

535. A novel about the Spanish Civil War by Ernest Hemingway, (1899-1961).

Indu writes to say that there are all manner of rumours about us. Of course, people will indulge in these usually unintelligent queries about what might happen. The best thing to do is to ignore them completely and carry on as if they did not exist. Otherwise they merely disturb the mind. Love to Raja and you.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

THIRD YEAR

August 16, 1944 Thursday

A week ago we completed two years here. Indu writes that there are all manner of rumours concerning us—that we are going to be released or transferred; that Pantji & I are likely to be sent to Dehra Dun. I suppose some time or other we are likely to be released—Not just yet.

x x x x

Meanwhile, there is a lot of fuss and shouting going on about the coming Gandhi-Jinnah meeting⁵³⁶ on the 19th or 20th August. My mind is full of apprehension though at the same time I can forget about outside happenings to some extent. But what a situation to face when we go out. What a lot India will have to go through before she finds her feet.

x x x x

I carry on with my writing gradually approaching the end of it. Yet as I approach it, the end recedes—My original estimate of 700 MSS pages was passed long ago and now I have passed 850! However I have reached the last lap and I hope to finish it by the end of this month—

x x x x

Yesterday I had a telegram from Nan from Calcutta to say that Rita had been successfully operated upon for appendicitis.

536. Mahatma Gandhi met Jinnah at Bombay from 9 September 1944 for talks spread out over three weeks.

August 19, 1944

Darling Indu,

I have received your two letters—Nos. 76 and 77—dated 7th and 12th August. You mention rumours about us. These rumours have seldom any basis, and even when there is some justification for them it is slender and people are apt to exaggerate and distort so as to make them fit in with their wishes. The best thing to do is to ignore them completely. Last year you wrote to me some lines by A. Athenison⁵³⁷ “actual evidence I have none” &c. They contain a good picture of the origin and growth of rumour.

Your account of Mrs. Prasad has led me to think of the wider question of giving relief to the many who must be in desperate need of it. I am very glad Feroze has been devoting himself to this work.⁵³⁸ It is difficult to tackle such a big problem but the fact that it is big is all the more reason why we should tackle it. I should like to help. Indeed you should have drawn from my account for relief work without any special authority from me. I suggest that you give Feroze Rs. 100/- a month from my account and, whenever you think it necessary, a further lump sum.

I have often thought of Kailas and Sheila and others in England ever since this flying bomb business⁵³⁹ started. Obviously it is a great menace. I hope Sheila and her children have left London and gone to the country. Probably the war in Europe will not last very long but the concluding months are likely to be full of the most barbarous and inhuman devices to destroy human beings.

I had a telegram from *Puphi* from Calcutta to say that Rita had been successfully operated upon.

537. “Actual evidence I have none

But my aunt's charwoman's sister's son
Heard a maid in Downing Street
Say to a policeman on his beat
That she had a brother who had a friend
Who knew when the war was going to end.”

538. Feroze Gandhi was the secretary of the U.P. Political Sufferer's Distress Relief Committee.

539. Pilotless jet-propelled aircraft with explosive warheads were used by the Germans in the Second World War to bombard England.

I have no objection to extracts from my *Autobiography* appearing in the birthday volume⁵⁴⁰ which Mridu, Tendulkar and others are preparing for Bapu. It would be desirable to have dots between two separate quotations. As for correcting my English and my punctuation, I am not prepared to say that I am above correction. But Mridu and Tendulkar are hardly the persons to undertake this. Chalapathi Rau—I suppose he is the *Herald* man—is a good choice for editing. I like him both as a person and for his capacity. He is quiet and efficient at his job. If there is an obvious error in my writing, there is no reason why it should not be corrected, provided it is obvious enough and you agree. As a matter of fact if I had the chance to revise my *Autobiography* I would make many alterations in it. I never had the chance to revise it with any care. After my first writing of it, it was typed by Upadhyaya without any revision by me. I took this typescript with me to Badenweiler and rather hurriedly looked through it there. I could not apply my mind to it then and I was in a hurry to be done with it. The book was then published. I never tried to read through the printed book and of course the proofs never came to me. Krishna made himself responsible for its publication, proof correcting &c. So, oddly enough, the book was not revised by me at any stage. There was no occasion for it and I find this business of revising what I have already written very boring. It is a trying job even to read through it all again, though parts of it are sometimes referred to or re-read.

Then came the American edition. This was an abridged version and everything in connection with it was done in New York without reference to me. It was not possible for such reference to take place owing to wartime delays, and so I left it to Walsh and asked him to consult Krishna. Walsh complained that Krishna did not even answer his letters.

This American edition reached me in Dehra Dun Jail and for the first time I read my *Auto* in print right through. I was taken aback by some of the abridgements, which made no sense. There were also many minor changes to suit the American public, especially in the spelling of words. I accepted these minor changes but pointed out to Walsh a number of errors. These corrections were, I believe, carried

540. *Mahatma Gandhi: His Life and Works*, edited by D.G. Tendulkar, M. Chalapathi Rau, Mridula Sarabhai and Vithalbhair K. Jhaveri, contains articles and pictures depicting every phase of Mahatma Gandhi's life. An article in this volume, "The Spirit of India", is an extract from the writings of Jawaharlal, chiefly the *Autobiography*.

out in a subsequent American edition. But the English edition presumably remained unchanged.

It is difficult to make any changes in a printed book for this upsets the arrangement of the plates. The slightest change, for instance the addition of a comma, means changing the plate. A whole page may thus be changed but then care has to be taken not to affect the next page in any way. If a word or sentence is taken out in any page something in its place, occupying the same amount of space, must be given. All this is exceedingly tiresome and I have therefore refrained from interfering with the present arrangement of the book, although there are many changes which seemed to me to be desirable.

As for punctuation, it perplexes me frequently. I am sure I make mistakes in it, as well as in grammar generally. Not having paid much attention to grammar, except to a slight extent Latin & French grammar, I am rather at sea with questions relating to it. I have to go by sound and sight. That helps probably in style and I have a sense of words and the hang of a sentence. But minor errors are apt to creep in. Do you know the story of some eminent English writer—I think he was Oscar Wilde? He was asked how he had spent the day. He replied that he spent the whole morning in putting in a comma, another afternoon in taking it out again!

Glimpses was first published in India (by Kitabistan) without any revision by me at any stage. I did not even see the typescript made by Upadhyaya and this, as I discovered subsequently, was full of errors. The result was that the printed book was a horror and I could hardly look into it without extreme irritation. The English edition was hurriedly revised by me, chiefly on board ship when I was going to Europe in 1938.

If Mridu, Tendulkar & Co. are going to sit on judgment on people like Sri Prakasa &c. they will have their work cut out for them.

I am glad Bombay is pleasant now.

This is my letter No. 75.

Love

Your loving
Papu

August 20—Sunday

Received a message from Betty today at 1.20 a.m. (by telephone from Bombay Secretariat) : "Indu had baby boy this morning 8 a.m. Both doing well. Send love. Betty."

So I become a grandfather!

August 21, 1944

Darling,

So you have made me a grandfather!

I received the message yesterday in the afternoon. It had apparently come by telephone. I felt very happy that this tension was over and that you had successfully launched into motherhood. Pantji managed somehow to produce some very good and fresh *peras* (पेड़े) at tea-time to celebrate the occasion. I hope it is well with you and the little one. All our friends here send both of you their love and blessings.

All my love,

Your loving
Papu

August 26, 1944

Darling,

Your letter No 78 of the 16th Aug. reached me three days ago. It seems rather ancient history for since it was written you have become a mother and I have attained the dignified status of a grandfather. I am trying to find out how it feels to be a grandfather. Thus far I have experienced no particular change in my constitution but I suppose I shall grow into this new status, though I fear I lack the dignity for it.

I have had excited letters from Betty and *Puphi* and a few lines from Rita. Also a telegram from Amma and Rup. I suppose women are more excitable than men, but I have long had a theory that India as a nation, that is the Indian people as a whole, is rather feminine. That is why I suppose India is so lovable in spite of her many failings. I do not easily get excited but I experienced a deep feeling of contentment when I heard of the arrival of the newcomer. I was happy that

it was all safely over and that you were well. There was also a vague and comforting sensation of the future gradually pushing out the past, as it always does. This is usually a mixed feeling for one is usually attached to the past and does not like to break with it. Of course there is never an actual break; it is an unending and continuous flow, link after link in a chain which has no visible beginning and apparently no end. Yet the future always represents hope, though why it should do so has seemed to me one of the oddest traits of human nature, but it does so nevertheless, while the past is a curious mixture. There is always something of the promise of spring about the future. It seems young and growing and full of new life and the next winter seems far off.

The renewal of life from spring to spring, from generation to generation, has an amazing fascination. Therein lies the essence of immortality not only of the species but of that vital precious thing that is life, and, in human mind, of memories and ideas that grow from age to age and link the past with the ever-changing present. So a nation and a people taste of immortality and even a family lives on and on.

I am happy to learn that you had an easy delivery. That shows how essentially healthy you are. You will of course take care of yourself during the next month or so, and then you can live your normal healthy life, not remembering the ailments of the body which have sometimes worried you in the past.

Feroze I suppose reached Bombay just a day or two before your confinement. I am glad he was there in time for it.

You have added to the population of India. That is supposed to be—I doubt the figures but I shall accept them for the moment—four hundred million. Roughly speaking, we might say that the newcomer is the 400,000,00st. That is a formidable number and it will take a lot of living up to.

Betty says in her letter that she had offered prayers to Hanuman and Ganesh. I am glad there is somebody in the family who prays to the gods, for some of us, like me, are utterly lacking in this respect. But why choose these rather inhuman representations of the powers beyond us when there are so many beautiful and lovely creations of the imagination? Anyway old Ganesh has a very human twinkle in his elephantine eye and there is something irrepressibly humorous about him, and a merry look and laughter are gifts from the gods.

Betty no doubt will take all necessary steps to have a जन्मपत्र made. That should be done for that is our traditional way to record the exact date and time of birth. The date, according to the *Samvat* calendar, as far as I can make it out, is भाद्रपद शुक्ल पक्ष 2 -सं 2001—or, to put it

differently, the second day of the bright half of the moon in the month of *Bhadon*, *Samvat* 2001. The Gujratis, I think, have a slightly different reckoning and the month with them starts a fortnight earlier or later—that is according to one view it begins with the dark fortnight of the moon, according to the other, it begins with the bright fortnight. With us in the north it is the former. But this does not make any essential difference, although it is confusing. Betty writes that the time of birth was 8.11 a.m. But which time? The time observed outside now is wartime which is at least an hour ahead of normal time, possibly more. It is thus an artificial time and not the real time according to which noon should be when the sun is highest in the heavens. Here, in Alimadnagar Fort, we have continued to stick to the old time and have not adopted wartime.

I am returning the four reviews of Betty's book which you sent me. Please return them to her.

Love

Your loving
Papu

This letter is No. 77.

29-8-1944⁵⁴¹

Darling Bets,

Your message about the birth of the little one reached me the same afternoon and your letter giving fuller details came on the 24th. I did not write to you last week as I sent both my week's letters to Indu.

I was happy to get the news—not so excited as you must have been, for excitement is less in my line. I was particularly pleased to learn of the easy delivery Indu had. That is a very hopeful sign of good health. I hope that she and the baby have kept up to the mark during the days following the confinement. I suppose they will have to remain in Bombay for another month. It is comforting that this job has been done efficiently and well.

In my letters to Indu I suggested to her to ask you to get a proper *Jammapatra* जन्मपत्र made by a competent person. Such permanent

541. File No: 3590/H/II-2 Maharashtra Government Records; Police Commissioner's Office.

records of the date and time of birth are desirable. As for the time, I suppose the proper solar time should be mentioned and not the artificial time which is being used outside now. Wartime is at least an hour ahead of normal time.

The birth of a new member of the family always makes one feel reminiscent and remember one's own childhood days and other births. I missed your birth for I was in England then, but when Nan came and Indu, I was very much there and I have vivid recollections of the events. And then the growth of the little ones, their childhood, girlhood and womanhood. It is an unending panorama of human life with its sweetness and bitterness, its ups and downs. One would think that with all this age-long experience and personal and racial memories, nothing very novel can be expected. The old cycle repeats itself again and again. And yet whenever a person arrives, it is something absolutely new, like others and still unique in its own way. Nature goes on repeating itself but there is no end to its infinite variety and every spring is a resurrection, every new birth a new beginning. Especially when that new birth is intimately connected with us, it becomes a revival of ourselves and our old hopes centre round it.

In your letter you mentioned that Raja had fever. I hope this was nothing serious.

I am glad the children are getting used to school life. They will enjoy their brief holidays at home in October and you will find how full they are of their school experiences. Thus the child's horizon widens and he grows in experience. The return to school will be somewhat painful but there will be no such break as on the first occasion. School will no longer be an unknown and rather frightening place, but a place that is known and remembered and has many pleasant associations.

It is more than six months since I sent you a cheque. Surely you must have exhausted my last remittance long ago. Indu's confinement must have led to many odd kinds of expenses. I am enclosing a payment order on Bachhraj for Rs. 400/. If you want more, let me know.

Indu wrote to me that a second edition of your book had come out, or was on the point of coming out. I hope you have reached a satisfactory settlement with your publishers. Have you heard from the London and the New York publishers about your book?

Love

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

September 4, 1944

Darling,

Betty has been keeping me informed of developments. Her last letter came three days ago. I am sorry you and the infant both managed to catch a slight cold. I hope it has passed. Such things happen in spite of every care. The only real remedy is to have enough powers of resistance. Unfortunately these powers are limited in the early days. Now that the infant has attained the respectable age of a fortnight he will no doubt act in accordance with the responsibilities of that age. I hope Betty will write to me frequently—as frequently as the rules governing Ahmadnagar Fort permit—and keep me informed. My mind is with you all the time and I think of you and the infant, and the babe growing from day to day. I am glad you have kept nurses. Hold on to them and do not be in a hurry to part with them. Little things count at this stage and it would be folly to save money at the cost of worry. That will interfere with your own return to normal health as well as the baby's. For the babe depends ever so much on the mother. Also without proper nurses, Betty will inevitably have more to do and that will not be right. She is of course a perfect brick and it is a great comfort to me that she is with you. About expenses generally you should not worry. They are not your lookout.

Darling, I understand that you people have been referring to the infant as Rahul. Indeed *Puphi* wrote to me that this name was suggested some months ago and all of you had decided that it was going to be a boy. Well, Rahul is not a bad name—that was my first impression. But some further information I have gathered from Narendra Deva has made me change my mind. Rahul of course was Buddha's son and this tradition and connection are in its favour. But do you know what it means? It means a fetter, something that binds—a बंधन.⁵⁴² The story is that when Buddha, or Siddhartha as he then was, was told of the birth of his son, he exclaimed that this was a fresh बंधन or fetter attaching him to the life he was leading and from which he wanted to get away. That word of his—Rahula—caught on and became the name of his son. It has since been seldom used as a name, except rarely by Buddhist monks and the like—So the name is hardly suitable.

Betty says that you have prepared a list of possible names—She was going to send this list to me but apparently could not find it at the

⁵⁴² *Bandhan*.

time—When it comes I shall let you have my reaction after consulting friends here—Meanwhile, I mentioned the matter to Narendra Deva and the next day he came out with certain historical names from Sanskrit literature. They were unusual and worth considering. But I shall wait for your list and then write more about it.

Vallabhbhai has got some new publications of the Navajivan Press and among these I noticed a Gujrati translation of my *Letters from a Father to his Daughter*. They call it, I think, इन्दु ने पत्र.⁵⁴³ I am glad the Navajivan people have brought this out—Long ago, without my knowledge (I was as usual in prison then) the Law Journal Press gave permission to somebody in Gujrat to bring out a translation. This person brought out a very bad translation and made a lot of money out of it. When later I wrote to him, he was quite offensive about it—So I am glad a decent translation in Gujrati has now appeared.

It is pleasant here now—rather warm in the middle of the day and definitely cool at night. I hope you are having good weather in Bombay.

Feroze, I presume, is with you. He should remain with you and not hurry away—I hope that by the end of this month you can go to Allahabad so that the infant and you can enjoy the delightful cold weather there—

Love to you both,

Your loving
Papu

September 6—Wednesday

It is extraordinary how often I think of Indu and the baby and worry about them. Perhaps I might not have done so if the last bit of news had not been disconcerting. Indu caught a cold and then of course the babe got it. A day or two later they were removed from the nursing home to Betty's flat. This was earlier than was at first intended. Probably the cold hurried their departure.

It is five days since I got Betty's last letter and it seems an age—I imagine all manner of dire developments—else why should she not have

543. *Indu ne Patra*.

written earlier to assure me that all was well? My mind is restless and agitated. How these personal attachments pull at us and upset us when we bear wider misfortunes more stoically.

My writing work is yet not over though I have been giving enough time to it. Now I am at page 988! I am now at the very last spurt. There will be a feeling of relief when I finish it but also perhaps a sense of emptiness. It has filled the past five months for me—

September 8, Friday

Still no letter. I am distressed and my mind is full of foreboding.

x x x x

I finished the book yesterday—998 pages of manuscript. I shall look through some parts during the next few days and consider Pantji's & Narendra Deva's criticisms and then put the lot away and forget about it. Pantji & Narendra Deva are the only persons here who have seen what I have been writing. They have been very helpful.

September 9, Saturday

As I sat down to write to Indu today I received her letter—It was dated August 19, the day before her confinement. But there was a note added dated September 3 and this brought relief. Neither she nor the babe are rid of their cold and fever — Still I feel better—

x x x x

Today Bapu meets Jinnah in Bombay.

September 9, 1944

Darling,

I have spent quite a bad week, though why I should behave in this way I do not quite know. I thought I could control my feelings and emotions better, but I realize how one's mental discipline and hardly-acquired wisdom are swept aside for a while at least by the surge of feeling.

On the 1st of September I got Betty's last letter in which she told me of your cold and fever and the little one's cold. I was a little worried, but not much. I hoped to have further and better news within two or three days. As the days went by and no further news came a growing apprehension seized me and I grew restless in mind. I was thinking of you and the babe most of the time and wondering how both of you were. You would soon get over your cold I hoped, but the little one, a few days old, how would he fare? I remembered the time when you got a bad attack of influenza when you were a few months old—about six. A very vivid picture of you then lying in a cot in Dol Amma's garden room in what is now Swaraj Bhawan came to me. Under instructions from Ranjit Singh (the gallant Major), who was treating you, all the doors were closed and the room was full of some kind of vapour—eucalyptus or some such thing. A long-necked, rather primitive apparatus produced this vapour and its nose was so arranged so as to be near your tiny face. I presume they have better ways of treatment now. Anyway I remembered that scene and all the trouble you were having with your breathing and coughing. I felt so helpless. Fortunately you got over your trouble soon.

For eight days I have had no letter at all from anyone to give me news of you. This was a big gap and I worried and could not make out why this was so. I think this is yet another sign of age. Or is it the usual thing for grandfathers to do? I thought of how I must take the little one in hand and help him to build up a strong and healthy body. A delusion I suffer from—that I know a great deal about the rules of health and that anybody who follows them must of necessity remain healthy. Really it is only another aspect of my general tendency to interfere with other people. You and Feroze will have to hold me in check.

As I was beginning this letter, at last a letter was handed to me in the usual On His Majesty's Service envelope. I peeped in and saw it was from you. It was dated August 19th. Welcome as it was, I felt disappointed. Oh this was your old unfinished letter and contains no later news. But as I read it I found that there was a later addition dated Sept. 3rd. I felt better. But I am not entirely reassured. I do not like this continuing temperature and cold. I have no doubt that both you and the baby will improve rapidly in the Allahabad climate. But not just at present as September is not a good month there. October is just right, not cold but pleasant and slowly cooling off with November. But it would be desirable for you and the babe to get rid of the cold completely before you travel. A long journey might aggravate an existing distemper. Also I think it would be as well, before

you go, to have yourself X-rayed &c.—In this matter, as in others affecting your health and the babe's, you should follow Jivraj's advice. He is cautious and sound and knows your history.

About the names, Betty has not sent me the list. I shall await that list before consulting Narendra Deva again—I shall also ask Maulana—It had struck me also some time ago that an additional Persian name would be desirable.

I was interested to learn about the Hebrew edition of my *Autobiography*. When you feel better, I should like you to write to Mr. Benton,⁵⁴⁴ or whatever his name is. Tell him that I was happy to have news of the book. I received none of his letters or his cable. I wrote to him also in March 1942, in addition to my cable, but evidently he did not receive my letter.

Some little time back I wrote to you to arrange for a payment of Rs. 100 monthly to Feroze for his relief work. In addition will you please arrange for a lump payment of Rs. 1000/- to him from my account. I am sure he will put this to good use in giving relief to people standing in need of it. Apart from this Rs. 100/- a month should continue.

I am glad to have news of Madan Bhai and Rafi. I think I told you that the book you sent me dealing with the Chinese Medical Mission — *And One Did not Come Back* — did not reach me —

I am sending you today a bundle of old magazines and periodicals—
Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 79.

I have just received two letters from Betty dated 31st Aug. and 3rd Sept. Also the list of names.

I am enclosing an order on Bachhraj to pay Rs. 1000/- to Betty. This is to cover the expenses so far incurred on hospital charges and nurses. Betty will see to the payment. Do not worry about them.

Papu

544. William Benton (b. 1900); U.S. Senator, 1949-53; met Jawaharlal in March 1937 at Allahabad.

12-9-1944

Darling Betty,

Two of your letters dated 26th and 29th August reached me by September 1st. The other two dated 31/8 and 3/9 came together on September 9th. You wrote regularly enough but there was delay in letters reaching me and I was a little worried at the absence of news for 9 days, especially as the last news I had had was not satisfactory. However, now I have had better news and I hope all is going well.

Love to Raja and you.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

September 16, 1944

Darling Indu,

Your letter of the 9th Sept. and Betty's of the day before have brought good news about the babe. I hope his progress will now be rapid—

I have myself been in the grip of *la grippe*. It has been a nuisance. I think I am on the mend now. I hope a letter does not carry 'flu bugs.

As for the name—the list you sent me contained some attractive names but on the whole it is not inspiring.

In the classical period of Sanskrit the names were usually two in one—that is two words joined together to form one name. Thus Nagarjuna, Kumarajiva, Ajitasena, Gunavarman, Adisena, Amoghavajra, Paramartha, Jivagupta. All these are actual names of famous Indian scholars all of whom, except for the first and greatest of them—Nagarjuna—went to China, Kumarajiva became a famous writer in Chinese. This practice of two words to form one name prevails today also but the words have ceased to have much meaning—thus: Jawahar-lal! I like this two-word formation of a name. It is musical & meaningful. Narendra Deva has suggested the following six names for you to consider:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| 1 प्रियदर्शी ⁵⁴⁵ | 'One who is of pleasing appearance' |
| 2 कमलशील ⁵⁴⁶ | 'One who partakes of the qualities of a lotus' |

545. Priyadarshi.

546. Kamalsheel.

- 3 सिद्धार्थ⁵⁴⁷ 'One whose desires have been accomplished'
Gautama Buddha's home name
- 4 विजयरत्न⁵⁴⁸ विजय standing for फीरोज़ —victory—and
रत्न for Jawahar
- 5 परमार्थ⁵⁴⁹ 'Supreme beatitude'—a famous Indian author
in China
- 6 पद्मविजय⁵⁵⁰ पद्म (lotus) is the symbol of purity and
beauty—It also symbolizes India. It is also
an epithet of Rama— पद्मा is the name of
लक्ष्मी = कमला = इन्दिरा

These are listed more or less in Narendra Deva's order of preference. They are all attractive names but I would limit the choice to प्रियदर्शी, कमलशील, विजयरत्न and पद्मविजय। Of these both Narendra Deva and I like प्रियदर्शी best. It is simple, meaningful and sounds well—It is unusual enough and yet not odd. Narendra Deva, in suggesting this name, did not know that your second name was प्रियदर्शिनी. The fact that it fits in with your name is in its favour. The one serious disadvantage attached to it is that it cannot be shortened easily. प्रिय may do for intimates but one cannot go about the world being addressed as darling by everybody.

Priyadarshi, I might add, was Ashoka's name. It occurs in his inscriptions—Also it is an epithet of one of the former Buddhas.

Maulana (in consultation with Asaf Ali) has suggested an ancient Iranian name also. I think it is a Pahlavi word but it is still used in Persian and sometimes, though rarely, as a name for both boy and girl. It is: बिर्जिस برجیس—Birjees—This was the old name of Jupiter, the planet. As Jupiter had a very high place in the ancient world (Jove was king of the gods in Greece), the word came to mean also: "the auspicious one". So now it means both the planet Jupiter and the auspicious one—

बिर्जिस will suffer from one advantage or disadvantage—It is likely to be Sanskritized or Hindiized into ब्रजेश (ब्रज + ईश lord of Braj or Vraj = Krishna).

How do you like the combination: Priyadarshi Birjees —प्रियदर्शी बिर्जिस. I do not think it sounds at all bad, though all new combinations are odd to begin with. Anyhow, think over it and consult Feroze and others. Do not forget to consult Nani or otherwise she will feel hurt.

547. Siddhartha.

548. Vijayaratna.

549. Parmartha.

550. Padmavijaya.

There is no immediate hurry and there is no reason why you should accept my primary recommendation unless you yourself agree with it.

I am returning to you a number of small books and pamphlets:

- 1 Sagittarius: *Targets* — Give this to Chitti
- 2 Nym Wales: *New China*
- 3 Guehenus: *Journal d'un Homme de 40 ans*
- 4 *Tomorrow*: 2 issues
- 5 *Premchand*
- 6 Yeats: *Sophocles: King Oedipus*
- 7 Aurobindo Ghose: *Ideal & Progress*
- 8 —do—: *Thoughts & Glimpses*
- 9 *War Prose*
- 10 Arnold's *Light of Asia*
- 11 Abbas: *Tomorrow is Ours*
- 12 *New Kashmir*

I am now giving more time to reading and so I hope to return books frequently. You can also send me the two or three books you are holding on for me. Some time back you or Betty asked me if I had read Ernest Hemingway's: *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. This book has just reached me—sent by Kamala Shankar Pandya of Dohad. So do not duplicate it.

And now I shall retire to nurse & at the same time fight my cold—I am feeling particularly stupid—deaf—weary-eyed—hoarse—sore-throated—heavy-headed, and generally not particularly human—

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 80.

September 20. Wednesday *Id-ul-Fitr*

I have had a mild attack of 'flu—Nothing much but it made me feel bad for two or three days. I am now recovering, most people here have had something of the kind.

x

x

x

x

I finished the revision of my MSS today incorporating some of Pantji's suggestions. I had to drive myself to read this again—or parts of it.

Ever since I finished writing my interest in it largely evaporated and I had no desire to go back to it. I wondered if I had done a worthwhile job or not. It is so difficult for the author to judge. Sometimes I felt that it was pretty good, and then later it would seem very second-rate. Thinking of it now it does not appear too good. Perhaps some parts are not bad, but as a whole? Anyway I am weary of it and it has been finally put away in the trunk.

Perhaps it is my mood that is at fault. I feel rather empty—not exactly depressed but just empty. Not hoping nor fearing—just not feeling anything acutely—Not caring perhaps. My colleagues here are greatly worked up about the Gandhi-Jinnah talks. They discuss them without end. They interest me too but it is almost a distant impersonal interest. Whatever the outcome I doubt if I shall be excited about it. Unless my mood changes.

Fed up—that I suppose describes my state of mind. Fed up with myself, with our people, with India, with the world, with the horror of war, with the worse horror of men's littleness and selfishness, with the Congress, with almost everything. Small incidents reported in the press show up the pettiness of our people and upset me more than major occurrences.

September 23. 1944

Darling,

I have received this morning your letter of Sept. 15th—No. 81. Also a letter from Betty of the same date. The जन्मपत्र has also come. I shall return it to you later.

I am happy to learn that both you and the babe are making good progress. The first month is well over now and the babe should grow now faster and put on weight. You do not say anything about your return to Allahabad and so I presume you are staying on in Bombay for the present. I have some books which I want to return to you. I suppose I had better hold on to them till you are back in Anand Bhawan.

I have already written to you about the names. Puphi writes that she has a list of boys' names prepared by Ranjit—chiefly names of the Sun—Surya—I have not received the names yet. There is a host of such names in Sanskrit and some are very attractive. I shall forward the list to you, so that you can consider these additional names also.

When you go back to Anand Bhawan, will you arrange to give some small presents to the servants there on my behalf. This is on the

occasion of the arrival of the babe there, but really that is an excuse to enable us to help the servants a little. I suggest that you pay them as follows: Hari 15/-, Bhola 15/-, Abul Hasan 10/-, Khaliq 10/-, Tulsi 10/-, Lachhminia 10/-, Bansi, Binda, Datadin, Ganga, Rama & Raghubir—each 5/- also the pensioners: *Bhishti*, Jumna, Behari's mother and Asghar Ali's wife each 5/-. I have taken these names from Ladli Bhai's list—If there are any more you will of course add their names.

Also give each of Raja and Betty's servants Rs. 10/-. If you feel like giving more to anybody do so.

You will remember that I wrote to you about Khaliq some months back. I made it clear then that we could not increase his pay beyond what I had suggested. Also that I had no objection to Khaliq bettering his prospects elsewhere if he had the chance to do so. So long as he remained with us he would get his present salary, and later if he wanted to come back, I would take him. In addition (and apart from the fact whether he remained with us or not) Rs. 10/- a month was to be given for his daughter's education. I want to be quite fair to Khaliq but I do not want him to sit idly by doing nothing. That is not good for him or for others. You will therefore give him work if he stays on and otherwise deal with him as you think fit.

Did I tell you that I had received the bundle of books sent by P. C. Joshi through you?

Some weeks ago I read in the papers of the death of our old Parsi friend Anupchand Shah.⁵⁵¹ I was pained at this news. I liked him greatly. In his own quiet way he was extraordinarily decent. Always when I was in Bombay he came to see me but he was careful not to waste my time. Once he invited us to his house somewhere in Malabar Hills.

I was amused to read your account and Betty's of your visit to Bapu and the conversation that took place between him and Rajaji about women. We are all rather incomplete, lopsided, are we not? It is rare to find an integrated, more or less complete, individual.

Feroze, I suppose, has gone back to Allahabad.

I am sending you today a bundle of foreign periodicals.

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 81.

551. A businessman of Bombay.

September 27. Wednesday—Vijaya Dashmi

Do I feel better? Perhaps a little—Partly because I have been slowly getting rid of the after-effects of the 'flu. Physical well-being has a powerful effect on the mind, more so in prison than elsewhere, for here there is nothing to divert the mind. I am not quite fit yet and certainly a drowsiness steals over me. I succumb to it and sleep in the daytime. But I am far better than I was a week ago and have less of the tired feeling.

X

X

X

X

Having finished the writing & revising of *The Discovery of India* I feel rather at a loose end. It kept me busy and my mind occupied for over five months and I was often worried at the prospect of my release before I had finished it. That little worry is over and I am prepared for discharge now! Indeed as the question of possible release was in my mind, I prepared for it in a way so that it should not take me un-awares—According to old habit, I prepared a note of what I should do prior to and at the time of release—I distributed our flowerseeds, all neatly packed up, to my co-prisoners, as mementoes of A.F. The idea was not so much of release as of transfer to some other prison where these seeds might come in useful.

Then I looked through such papers and figures I had relating to my accounts with Bachhraj to find out where I stood financially. I have had the foggiest of notions about them. I made a note of what the position was, more or less—

Then I looked through the draft of the will I had made a year ago and added a note to it.

I sent some books to Indu—checked and cleaned & listed my remaining books. They are a goodly number—over 150. Even labels for my boxes were prepared & in some cases stuck on!

Finally I had a haircut—So everything that I could think of was done! It amused me to go through this ceremonial although there is no chance of our discharge in the near future.

X

X

X

X

I have been reading odd books—Bodmer's *Loom of Language*—Hogben's *Interglossa*, Milton's *Paradise Lost*—Lamb's *Letters* &c. A sense of restlessness has seized me and even this reading is spasmodic—

For an individual culture, there has been some achievement.
 "Human descent, possession is life, and since it is given
 to him by the God man, he must use it as well as
 be aware of the share of a community and find
 part, as he is not to be treated for years without
 purpose, as he that dying he has say: 'all my
 life and my strength and power to be put down
 in the world - the liberation of mankind.'"

Albuquerque, N.M.
 September 1, 1944
 Revised December 1944
 7

Revised 10/10/44
 Revised 11/12/44

AP

Some minor changes

revised

11/10/44

AP

AP

AP

AP

AP

AP

AP

AP

AP

In one of Lamb's letters I came across two lines. We have yet the sight of, he says:

Of sun and moon and star, throughout the year,
And man and woman.

Yes, we have had sight of sun and moon & star—but hardly of man and not at all of woman. For two years and a month and 18 days we have been here—779 days—and we are a little tired of looking at each other and our jailers. And woman! How strange it is that we have not even had a distant glimpse of a woman during these years. Previously there were interviews in jail—Not so now—

x

x

x

x

I have finished this book which I began two years ago and now I must go on to another if the desire to write seizes me. Today—*Vijaya Dashmi*—is an appropriate day to begin an undertaking—hardly to end one.

Sept. 30. 1944

Darling Indu,

Thus far I have had no letter from you this week. Perhaps today's post may bring one—as it sometimes does. Yesterday I had a brief note from Birju *chacha* from Srinagar congratulating me on my becoming a grandfather. Will you tell him that I have received it? I am not writing to him myself as first cousins are not included in the list of those to whom I may write. Perhaps as a special indulgence I might be allowed to write to him but I see no reason to ask for indulgences. He has been told that Rajaji has suggested the name—'Motilal'—for the babe and he disapproves of this as being opposed to our tradition. Tell him no one intends to give this name. He also expresses the hope that I am continuing my *asans*. Yes, I am doing so to some extent, especially the *sarvangasana* and *shirsasana*.

I notice in the papers a report about my illness. There is no basis for this and I do not know how such reports get about. I had a cold and a touch of 'flu but that kind of thing is not to be called illness. I got over it soon enough and am quite fit. I have no intention of falling ill, and it is my belief that illness comes usually—apart from accidents and untoward occurrences—by some kind of subconscious invitation. Of course no one wants to be ill but one can follow a line which leads to illness or to a receptivity to illness.

Some days ago, I sent you the horoscope, with the request to the authorities here that it might be forwarded by registered post.

Do you remember a visit we paid in 1931 to a French Count in Ceylon? We were motoring from Colombo to the southern tip of the island, along the western palm-fringed coast, and about half-way we visited the strange and attractive residence of this unusual individual. It was a solid house all covered with tropical vegetation, situated on a kind of tiny island just off the coast. At low tide one could walk up to it almost, but when the tide came in, it stood out as a full island. We went in a boat and climbed up a rocky path to the house and found ourselves in a delightful house full of flowers and books. We spent an hour or so with the Count and then had to hurry on to our next engagement. The odd situation of the house and the man who had built it and occupied it lingered in my memory and often I have thought of them in later years. A few days ago I suddenly came across a long extract from a book evidently written by this man about himself and how he managed to settle down in Ceylon. All the old memories revived in me and the desire to read this book if it was available. He was one of those who had gone through the war of 1914-18 and this experience as well as the experience of the early after-war years had a powerful effect on him. He left his old family *chateau* in France and tried to find a refuge as far away from his old world as possible. And that was how he discovered the little island in Ceylon and built himself a house there. His book must be an interesting one. I do not suppose it is possible to get it, especially in India. Probably it had a small circulation when it came out and then disappeared from the book-shops and was remaindered-off, as the publishers say. Still I am mentioning the name for you to note down somewhere. It is: *The Gardens of Taprobane* by the Count de Mauny, (Williams & Norgate, London 1937). Taprobane is an old western name for Ceylon.

In my letter to you dated Sept. 9th I enclosed a payment order in favour of Betty for Rs. 1000/- on Bachhraj. You have acknowledged this letter but do not mention this order—I hope it reached you and you gave it to Betty.

You know the kind of cigarette-holder I use. It has room for a cigarette in the tube itself which acts as a nicotine absorber—my holder, after long use, has cracked. I am continuing to use it but it is not very satisfactory. I do not suppose it is possible to get a new one. But, when you go to Allahabad, you can send me a still older one that I possess. You should find this in one of the drawers of my dressing table. You will recognize it easily by a piece of paper stuck near the

end which holds the cigarette. If I get this, I might be able to fix up a workable holder out of the two brokendown ones.

Did I write to you, or was it to Betty?, more than a year ago asking for a Persian primer or some other elementary books in it? I was told then that they were not available. The desire to learn some Persian has come back to me. Having finished some work I have been doing I am, so to say, at a loose end, though of course there are always books to read. But I want some harder mental work than mere reading. Also there is the great advantage of having Maulana to help me with Persian.

The book I should like to have is Otto's *Persian Grammar and Conversation*. You are not likely to get it at any bookshop in India. But there is just a chance of your being able to find a copy which *Pupha* (Ranjit) used to have. Ask *Puphi* for it. She might look through *Pupha's* old books.

If you meet with no success in this quest, then ask the Kitabistan people in Allahabad to get me some elementary books in Persian, preferably Persian-English books. There are, I believe, such books for the military, as also ordinary school books.

Puphi writes that Allahabad is still hot and stuffy, or was ten days ago. I suppose a change in the weather will come soon. October is a good month there.

I am sending you to Bombay another bundle of foreign periodicals. I hope the babe and you are both flourishing.

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 82.

3-10-1944

Darling Betty,

I have received two letters from you since I wrote to you last—dated 8th and 15th September. Two days ago I had a letter from Indu in which she gave me news of Harsha's and Ajit's return for the holidays. She wrote also that she intended going back to Allahabad by the 7th October. By the time this letter reaches you she will probably have

left you. If she is still there tell her that my next letter to her will be sent to Allahabad. Also a parcel of books.

I am glad to learn both from your letter and Indu's that the boys have done well at school and especially that Harsha has put on weight. Ajit fortunately is healthy enough but Harsha has been rather weak and his putting on weight and taking a growing interest in games are excellent signs. They indicate that he stood in need of a change from Bombay life and more companionship of children of his age. I think your sending the boys to school has already been justified. Bombay is no place for growing children to become healthy and strong. The winter months in Gwalior will do them even more good.

Indu writes that you intend going to Allahabad after the boys return to Gwalior. I am glad of this—she does not mention Raja but I hope he will also go there and benefit by the delightful late October weather of Allahabad. It should just suit him. Not too cold yet and yet pleasantly cool. 'Pink winter' as it is called. Though perhaps this begins a little later.

I have read with some amusement the long account you have sent about Mridu's visit to Indu soon after her confinement and your subsequent correspondence. Of course Mridu was a little foolish in bargaining in just then and ought to have known better. But she meant well no doubt. We can't get rid easily of our old habits and traditions. It is true that sometimes a petty and unintentional step leads to grave consequences. Fortunately that has not been so in the present case. Anyway it is all over now and no one need worry about it, and certainly it should not be allowed to come in the way of your normal relations with Mridu.

I have been noticing a number of references about my 'illness' in the papers. One might almost imagine that I was in the grip of some fell disease, some mysterious illness that required all the wise men of Gotham to confer and advise. All this is rather silly though I appreciate the kindly thoughts of people who are anxious about me. But then anxiety is wasted on me for I am not ill at all. The report, whatever its source, was greatly exaggerated. I had a cold, which is always annoying for some days, and nothing worse. It has passed off. As a matter of fact I am the healthiest of our lot here and it is the others who require care and treatment.

Some time back you wrote that you were sending me the second edition of your book. It has not come yet. I suppose it is out.

The other day, reading some of the old *Letters of Charles Lamb* (the man who wrote the *Essays of Elia* and *Tales from Shakespeare*),

I came across a couple of lines. We have yet the sight of, he said:
 Of sun and moon and stars, throughout the year,
 And man and woman.

Yes, I thought, we have had yet the sight of the sun and the moon and stars, and yesterday was *Sharad Purnima*.⁵⁵² In the early dawn, when I wake up, I see Jupiter peeping over the roof of a building. It is still dark then but it is the signal for getting up. In the evening Venus appears as the Evening Star. The night sky is slowly changing over and putting on its winter appearance. We have sight of all these and they never lose their freshness. But of the men we see the range is limited and I fear we grow less and less fresh to each other. And woman? It struck me as an odd and arresting fact that for nearly 26 months—for 785 days to be exact—I had not seen a woman even from a distance. Previously it was not so, for even in prison we had interviews occasionally. And I began to wonder—what are women like? how do they look?—how do they talk and sit and walk?

And then I thought of the changing world—of how it must have changed during these 26 months. Children growing up and some of us, I fear, growing down. Meeting each other after a long interval, shall we recognize each other in the old way? Or will there be a feeling of shyness and strangeness as when we meet those we do not wholly understand? The private worlds each one of us lives in, worlds of fancy and feeling and imagination, have so long lain apart that they are apt to become strangers to each other, separate circles overlapping less than they used to. Partly that happens as we grow older, but the process is accelerated by the abnormal conditions we have been living in.

My love to you and Raja and the children.

Your loving brother,
 Jawahar

October 5, Thursday

My last entry in the journal was on Sept. 27th—*Vijaya Dashmi*—That closed the old book.

552. Night of the full moon in October.

On that auspicious day took place the inauspicious ending of the Gandhi-Jinnah talks.⁵⁵³ What a damp squib after all the shouting and praying and hou-hal! The lengthy correspondence, which I read with a certain impatience, was depressing. Jinnah, as usual, avoiding any positive or constructive suggestion and playing lawyer-like for position and vantage. Bapu, more positive and definite and yet rather vague. Perhaps it was inevitable that the talks should fail. But they should have failed on more definite points. Some definiteness has certainly come but not enough. What a quagmire it all is!

On the whole I was not greatly excited. I was less worried than others here. There have been, while the talks have been going on and afterwards, interminable discussions here. I have taken practically no part in them, nor has Maulana.

I think this must be some unconscious way of protecting myself from continuous irritation. I keep my mind occupied with other matters and the newspapers produce only a temporary ruffling of the surface. Not perhaps a healthy sign. Certainly it would be unhealthy if I behaved in this passive, escapist way outside. But here in confinement perhaps it is not so bad. It saves energy and worry.

Yet the worry is there at the back of the mind. A feeling of having run into a blind lane with no opening and life becoming just existence at a low level of sensation. The war and its consequences prevent a settling down of the mind and bring hope of changes everywhere. That helps.

x

x

x

x

I have been below par, physically. Nothing much but just a feeling of not being fit. Some reference made in the press about my illness⁵⁵⁴—it was just a cold—comments—Nan's telegram of inquiry to the Bombay

553. Mahatma Gandhi, while opposed to partition, proposed a form of self-determination whereby in the Muslim majority provinces both Muslims and Hindus would vote on the issue of separation. Jinnah insisted that the Muslims alone should vote on the question of separation, and that separation should be effected while the British were in India and not after India had become free.

554. A Bombay Government press note said: "Statements have appeared in the press that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had been suffering from influenza. This is not correct. Pandit Nehru had an ordinary cold from which he has recovered and he is now alert and vigorous and in good health; no fever was recorded and no complaint of fever was made."

Govt.—questions⁵⁵⁵ in the House of Commons &c.—Rather absurd all this. I suppose this is their way of showing some sympathy, being unable to do anything else.

I have got over the cold but a vague unease fills me. Is it physical or just mental or both? My eyes are giving some trouble and grow watery after a little reading. Perhaps they require stronger spectacles.

x

x

x

x

Nan has managed to get a passport for the U.S. or will get it soon. She and Rita will be leaving soon by air for America. I am glad. Good for her and for others.

Indu and the babe will be leaving Bombay for Allahabad within two or three days. The question of the name for the babe is troubling her and a host of names have been suggested.

x

x

x

x

We celebrated Oct. 2 as Bapu's birthday. There have been a number of celebrations during the past two weeks—*Id-ul-Fitr*, *Vijaya Dashmi*, Bapu's birthday. Soon there will be *Divali* and about that time we shall complete 800 days here—on the 18th Oct.

x

x

x

x

The Jailer, Balak Ram, took a month's leave from Sept. 4th and has just returned. During his absence Sendak, the Superintendent, shifted from his house to the Jailer's room here to keep watch over us for the 24 hours. A few days ago he told me that he had heard me moaning and making weird noises at night. I sleep in the verandah opposite my room. He sleeps inside his room on the other side separated from us by the open space—about 50 yards width—and a verandah. Yet he heard me! He thought at first that it was Pantji, who had been unwell, but Pantji disillusioned him and told him I was the guilty person.

I was not myself aware that I had been shouting or moaning.

x

x

x

x

555. On 3 October 1944, Amery told the House of Commons: "I made special enquiries and am informed that with the exception of Dr. Ghose, who is suffering from a mild internal complaint, all the members of the Working Committee now detained in Ahmadnagar are well. In particular I am informed that Pandit Nehru is vigorous, alert and fit."

October 7. Saturday

Day before yesterday on Oct. 5th at about 3.30 p.m. Sendak informed Mahmud that Government had ordered his immediate unconditional release. No reasons given. Mahmud said he would leave the next day.

Yesterday there was packing &c. for him and a faint touch of excitement for all of us. At about 2.15 p.m. he left our camp with the Supt. & a D.S.P. intending to visit a friend in the city and then take the train to Bombay. He had a bare hour before the train left. Still within this brief time, we were told later by Sendak, crowds gathered in the city and at the station. Sendak, unaccustomed to these demonstrations, was suitably impressed.

x x x x

Mahmud's release has nothing to do with the release of others here. Perhaps Rajendra Babu may also have been released in Behar—Behar is in a bad way owing to cholera, malaria, typhoid &c. killing thousands.

x x x x

Mahmud spent 788 days here—For over a year, since July 15, 1943—448 days—he and I were in the same room here. I am afraid we got on each other's nerves and I was not as tolerant always as I ought to have been. Some months ago in the course of an argument I lost my temper and upset him. Since then we have avoided discussions and our talks have been strictly practical.

x x x x

And now I am left by myself in this big room. I have had it cleaned today and have rearranged the furniture and my belongings.

Oct. 8. Sunday

News of Wendell Willkie's death came as a shock and I felt very sad. All of us were dejected by it. His book *One World* and his articles and statements had impressed me greatly⁵⁵⁶—Even more so his sticking

556. In his statements made during his six-week tour of the world and after his return to the US on 14 October 1942, he particularly criticised the American Government for its failure to take a positive stand on India's struggle for freedom.

to his principles at the cost of his nomination for the Presidential election. Whatever he may have been in his earlier days, he had developed into a rare type of statesman and, young as he was, he gave us hope for the future. Why do good men die and the undeserving live on and on?

October 9 1944

Darling Indu,

Your letter No. 82 of the 24th Sept. with baby's pictures reached me a week ago. Babies a few weeks old seem to me to be singularly alike. I suppose they are really not so. The picture I like best is the one in which he is yawning and stretching himself. Probably there is a fair amount of resemblance to you. The forehead seems to be rather like Feroze's.

As you know there has been a change in our little community here—Mahmud has gone and we are only eleven now. He must have given you some news about us, though there is really little in the way of news for we live in an eventless, and therefore newsless, world.

I suppose you have gone to Allahabad. I am sure the change will do you and the baby good. It is good that Mrs. Vakil is accompanying you and will spend a month with you in Anand Bhawan.

As for the names for the babe, I am afraid too continued a search is likely to confuse. You must remember that the field for choice is really unlimited, far more so than in the average European personal name. Sanskrit is very rich in names and in musical words which can be used for names. Lotus has scores of words with fine shades of meanings—I think you have a sufficient field to choose from already and you can add to the list any suggestion that *Puphi* intended making. Choose one finally then without further references.

For the present your choice seems to be राजीव रत्न.⁵⁵⁷ I noticed a paragraph in *The Leader* about it, in which reference was made to consultations with me and Narendra Deva. My first impression of राजीव रत्न was not very favourable but on repeating the name several times I began to like it. Narendra Deva also felt the same way. He suggested later a variation with the same meaning but without the alliteration: राजीव मणि.⁵⁵⁸ I do not particularly care for this, but I find that with fre-

557. *Rajiva Ratna*.

558. *Rajiva Mani*.

quent repetition every name gradually becomes familiar. Of the two I prefer राजीव रत्न. Rajiva is likely to be shortened into Rajji or Rajio.

Priyadarshika is a pretty name for a girl—Perhaps you know that there is a play of this name by Harsha, the king and playwright of the 7th century.

I have sent you a number of books to Allahabad. A list of these is enclosed. Three of them, you will notice, are *Puphi's*. Please give them to her.

This is a brief letter—partly because I can think of nothing else to write—partly as I am engaged in a thorough pre-Divali cleaning of my room. For a year and a quarter Mahmud and I shared this room—Now that he has gone I have it all to myself and I have spread out. I am having all my books, papers, clothes etc. aired and cleaned. It is extraordinary how cockroaches and crickets & other insects thrive here and develop large families. I try to eliminate them every few weeks and yet the next time they are as populous than ever. Much worse of course are the खटमलs.

This is my letter No. 83.

Love

Your loving
Papu

October 14. 1944

Indu darling,

I have received your last letter from Bombay—No. 83 dated 3rd October. The next will be from Anand Bhawan where you have returned, with a new member of the family, after many months.

Puphi, I suppose, is in Allahabad now—She appears to be a little worried about my having received or not the letters she has been sending me recently. I had a letter from her yesterday and another this morning. Will you tell her that I have received, during the last six weeks, the following letters from her: dated 9/9 from Calcutta; dated 20/9 from Allahabad together with Chand's & Tara's letters and their picture; dated 25/9 from Allahabad; yesterday a letter from Allahabad dated 4/10; and today one from Sevagram dated 8/10. That is the lot—I think I have received all her letters. During this period I have written to her to Calcutta on 2/9; to Allahabad on 26/9, and again to Allahabad on 5/10. With the last letter I returned Chand's and Tara's

letters. I have answered all her letters except the last two which came yesterday and today — These I shall answer in due course — There is nothing urgent in them.

Puphi writes that everyone in Sevagram referred to the babe as Motilal. This may be the southern custom but it certainly is not our way and I see no reason to adopt it unless there is something obviously attractive about it. I see no attraction. And so with all deference to Bapu and others I think we should not submit to this pressure. Now that you have consulted various people and considered a number of alternative names, you and Feroze should finally fix upon a name.

I hope you have found Anand Bhawan in good condition and in good spirit — for a house, just as a city or a country, has a peculiar atmosphere attaching to it. It varies and has its ups and downs, its periods of smiling content and depression. Children of course make a great difference to a house and garden. Children have lived in Anand Bhawan but, come to think of it, this is the first time a baby has made it its home.

I hope you will see that our old servants are doing well in these hard times and have the necessities of life provided for them. The garden should be looked after. This is just the season for it and Feroze, I am sure, will make it put on its best appearance.

You have written to me that you gave the cheque to Betty and have also noted the little gifts for the servants. One matter I wrote to you about you have not mentioned. I asked you to arrange to pay on my behalf Rs. 1000/- to Feroze for his relief work — Also, in addition to this, he was to be paid Rs. 100/- a month for this work. I hope you have seen to this.

I notice from the papers that Upadhyaya is out. He came out just in time to receive you on your return to Allahabad. I do not know how he is, nor do I know where his wife and children are. Naturally he would like to be with his people for some time. Give him facilities for doing so.

We have had heavy rain here — probably the last of the monsoon. The weather is slowly changing though it is still warm enough — As a sign of the change I noticed the wagtail here this morning and yesterday an oriole could be heard. Today I saw also an unusual sight. In a bed containing cosmos flowers there was a cocoon-like thing hanging on to a stalk. We had noticed this some weeks ago and I expected some kind of a moth to emerge from it in due course. Well, it burst this morning and, to our amazement, hundreds of very tiny grasshoppers (or something resembling them) came out of it. I suppose they will

grow now to the usual size. They are called in Hindustani घोड़ा, ⁵⁵⁹ so I am told, because of the horse-like way they stand with head up.

The bunch of books you sent me from Bombay has not come yet. I am anxious to have the *Persian Grammar* — If you can discover Otto in Anand Bhawan or at 2 Mukerjee Road, that would be excellent.

This is my letter No. 84.

Love

Your loving
Papu

Deepavali,
17.10.44

Darling Betty,

Regarding my health, etc., you ought to know me well enough to realize that I can look after myself and that I attach far more importance to physical well-being than most people. It is not a question of my agreeing with Govt. — I seldom agree with it. But I rely on myself for my physical and mental conditions and not on Govt. agencies to which I attach little importance. Accidents apart, there is no reason why my health should fail me for a long time to come. In jail especially I consider it a point of honour to keep fit and an inexcusable lapse and weakness to fall ill. I do not want to become an invalid in the hands of the Govt. or their representatives. I want to retain as much of my physical and mental freedom as possible. It is enough that I am confined within four walls and cut off from human beings outside. I do not propose to add to that confinement.

I may be kept in prison but nobody is going to take from me my dignity and composure. Whining and complaining are not in my line. Nor are outbursts of strong language good enough. Apart from other reasons, they drain away energy and vitality and I want to preserve my energy.

As a matter of fact I keep not only physically well — and this is more than I can say of others — but am mentally at peace. I do not worry. Why should I? I keep busy with my day's work and sleep well at night. It is totally immaterial to me whether I go out of prison or remain here for some more years. Or perhaps that is not quite correct,

559. *Ghora*—Horse.

for it would make a difference. But I am sure that I can continue in prison for an indefinite period without worrying much about it.

We have seen in the newspapers that interviews are going to be allowed to us. We have received thus far no other intimation of this or the conditions governing them. It is very good of the Government to allow us this privilege after nearly two and a quarter years. But for my part I have no present desire or intention to take advantage of it. I need not go into reasons for this. It is enough that the conditions under which interviews are likely to take place do not fit in with my conception of my dignity or the dignity of my dear ones. So I do not want you or anyone else to take the trouble to come here or to apply for an interview with me. Naturally I should love to see you all but I am not at all sure that a brief jail interview would prove satisfactory to either party.

Day after tomorrow is *Bhaiya Duj* and a fortnight later is your birthday. As I cannot possibly send you a present from here I am enclosing a cheque for Rs. 100/-. Will you get a present and give it to yourself with my love?

I was glad to hear of the healthy appearance of the boys.

Love to you and Raja.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

October 19 — Thursday

The third *Divali* in Ahmadnagar Fort has come and gone. We celebrated it in our usual way with some illumination in a small way. This was rather successful this time. The flagstaff in the centre of our court has begun to resemble the Eiffel Tower of Paris. We have trained creepers along with four cable supports of the flagstaff and these have grown rapidly and produced a resemblance to that Tower. In the centre of this at various heights lights (दीवे) were arranged, and the effect was pleasant and agreeable.

At night we used some coloured candles in our dining room—

x x x x

Yesterday — 18th October — we completed 800 days here. Another landmark — the next century, 900 days, falls on January 26th — Independence Day —

x x x x

Ever since Mahmud went there have been many surprises for us in the papers — what he said and what is more important, what he did not say — He was released unconditionally so the order ran. Was it on grounds of health? This might have been presumed as he is a bundle of diseases — Some mention of this in the papers brought out a prompt denial from Govt. No he was not released on grounds of health; in fact he was not ill, so Govt. proclaimed. The latter positive statement was astonishing even for a Govt. communique. Whatever the reasons for Mahmud's release, no one in his senses can call Mahmud fit and well. He is continually suffering from a number of serious diseases. Probably because these are chronic they are taken for granted by Govt. whose idea of illness is high temperature and being completely bed-ridden. Filaria, heart-trouble, gall-bladder, serious eye-trouble, persistent spitting out of blood, pyorrhoea — are some of his ailments, and additional minor troubles supervene. Almost it might be said that he is broken up physically and even to some extent mentally because of all this. It is true that he had most of these troubles when he was arrested and brought here and they have continued since then. There have been some new ailments also.

Govt.'s statement that Mahmud was not released on grounds of ill-health led people to discuss the real reason for his discharge. Whispers apparently started that he had given some kind of undertaking to Govt. Newspapers referred to them and Mahmud's attitude encouraged these rumours. He remained mum and avoided pressmen. We read about this with amazement for there had been no hint of undertaking so far as we knew. Why does he not deny these insinuations, we wondered?

Then Maulana remembered that Mahmud had told him that he had sent a letter⁵⁶⁰ to Govt. about his ill-health and had demanded permission for his own doctors to see him. What else had he written in this letter? No one knew for none had seen that letter. It appeared that not even Sendak the Supt. had seen it as he had given it sealed.

So doubts grew. How excessively foolish Mahmud was and anything might come out of that folly. Foolish people often think they are acting cleverly and in trying to overreach others fall themselves into the pit of their own making.

Mahmud stated that he would make a statement after seeing Bapu as we had asked him to convey a message to him. As a matter of fact we had done no such thing except to send him our greetings. The

560. On 19 August 1944 Syed Mahmud wrote a letter to the Viceroy's Private Secretary, without the knowledge of his prison colleagues, criticising Mahatma Gandhi for the August Resolution and reiterating that he himself had supported the war effort. This led to his release.

real reason for not sending a message through Mahmud was because we did not trust Mahmud's ability in conveying our ideas correctly. Besides no simple message could be sent as the situation was a complicated one and our reactions varied.

Why should Mahmud say that he would issue a statement only after seeing Bapu? What was there to prevent him from denying the charge of undertaking if this was false? It was all very odd and irritating. Evidently there was something behind all this of which we had been unaware.

Mahmud told everybody that he and I shared a room. Inevitably people would think that he would act only after consulting me. Yet I knew nothing and as a matter of fact we had not been on very good terms since April last when we had a rumpus. We continued to carry on normal conversations but during the last six months we discussed nothing serious and deliberately avoided a real talk.

Mahmud went to Wardha — saw Bapu⁵⁶¹ — and then issued a brief statement. He said that he had been maligned &c.— That he had written to Govt. previously (from A.F.) and he wanted to publish this letter but he could only do so after he got Govt.'s permission as the letter had been marked 'Private & Confidential'. He had asked for this permission —

So now it appeared for the first time that he had written something to Govt. apart from what he might have said about his ill-health &c. What this was none of us know. Probably he wrote something very foolish.

x

x

x

x

Mahmud's statements about the health & activities of the people here have not been satisfactory. But to add to his own deficiencies the printer's devil produced a remarkable piece of information. It appeared in some newspapers (*Leader, Amrit Bazar Patrika*) that while the older persons played chess and cards occasionally, 'in the evenings some girl inmates take to badminton'! This apparently ought to have been 'some agile inmates' etc.

561. He explained to Mahatma Gandhi the circumstances under which he had written that letter to the Government and admitted that he had been guilty of gross impropriety towards the other members of the Congress Working Committee.

But many people will no doubt be taken in and imagine that we have the company of girls! Considering that we have not seen a girl or a woman since the day of our arrest.

x

x

x

x

Two days ago it was announced in the papers that Govt. was permitting interviews to us. Yesterday this information was conveyed to us by the Jailer—All of us have reacted against accepting interviews though for different reasons. Maulana has suffered so much inner hurt that his pride will not permit him to accept any so-called favour—He is for no interviews here or even elsewhere, in case we are transferred. Others simply think that it is far too much trouble to ask our people to travel thousands of miles just for a brief interview. Some hold a middle opinion. Anyway it is clear that no one is going to have any interview in Ahmadnagar Fort. I have written to Betty not to seek an interview.

Nan will be going soon to America and I should have loved to see her before she goes. But that is off also.

We are meeting here today to consider what answer we should send to Govt. The interviews allowed are limited to close relatives—to those with whom we can correspond.

October 21, Saturday

We were all agreed that we should not accept interviews in the existing circumstances. But when it came to giving reasons for this decision there was a difference of opinion. Ultimately we left it to Maulana to write on behalf of all of us to the Suptd. and to write briefly. He sent a brief note⁵⁶² yesterday. I suggested some changes and additions in it but he did not agree to them. It was a small matter after all what he wrote.

I have today written to Indu also about our decision not to have interviews. She is back in Allahabad, returning home after many months.

562. Abul Kalam Azad wrote that "the general attitude of the Government towards us during the past twenty six and a half months, and the rigorous isolation to which we have been subjected, even in spite of personal tragedies, are not calculated to incline us to take advantage of the personal facility".

Oct. 21, 1944

Darling Indu,

I have had no news of you since your return to Allahabad. The first few days must have been rather full for you had been away from home for many months.

The books you sent from Bombay have not reached me yet. Perhaps the fact that Laski's and Huxley's books have titles with the word 'Revolution' in them has induced the censors at the Bombay Secretariat to pay particular attention to them. I have received, however, a parcel containing the Travancore cigarette case, the Kashmir pullover, the *pashmina* shawl and two boxes of cigarettes. I wish you had kept the shawl for yourself or the baby. I really have no use for it here.

The sweater or pullover is satisfactory. It is just a bit heavier and not quite so soft as my old one. It is also slightly tight but I suppose it will widen with use. My old pullover is full of holes, as I wrote you once. I suppose these holes could be mended. It might be worthwhile sending it to Kashmir for the purpose — But for the present I shall keep it.

The cigarette case which Chinni has sent me is well-made and attractive. Only there is just a minor defect — it is apparently not meant to contain the average cigarettes — my cigarette cannot be pushed into its separate compartments. I tried a thinner one. This entered with some difficulty but then would not come out again without the help of some kind of pincers! It is curious how artisans who do good work ignore some very obvious aspect of what they are making.

We have had our third *Divali* here, suitably celebrated in our own small way and the next day, Oct. 18th, we completed 800 days here and started on the ninth century. I have got rather into the habit of measuring our stay here by a century of days — a month is too short a time, a year too long. The present century will end on a significant day — January 26th — and then we shall enter the millennial century.

Ever since Mahmud has left us and gone out we have read with some surprise the statements made by him or about him in the papers. But the biggest of all surprises came when we read an account of our life here which, *inter alia*, said that the older people played chess or cards "and in the evening some girl inmates take to badminton". Girls! Considering that we have not seen anything resembling a girl or a woman ever since we left Bombay 26½ months ago. And yet there it was soberly stated in *The Leader* as well as in the *Patrika* in some agency message. Both the Allahabad papers agreed in this and I

wondered what our friends and others reading this would think of it. Evidently the sub-editors had found nothing odd about it and so it was possible that others might also imagine that a benevolent and benign Govt. had taken some steps to cheer us up by arranging to send some girls to play badminton in the evenings. But no. They did not come from outside, they were the 'girl inmates'. Who were these girl inmates? Where exactly do I come in for I play neither chess nor cards?

A reference to some other newspapers brought some light. Apparently the word 'agile' had been converted into 'girl' in the process of transmission. The editors of *The Leader* and *Patrika* were not clever enough to spot this or even to doubt the accuracy of the message.

We were informed two or three days ago that we would be permitted to have fortnightly interviews in the future under the usual jail rules. You must have seen this piece of news in the newspapers. After 2 years and two months and more we have forgotten all about interviews and only vague memories persist of what people outside our little group are like. For various reasons which I need not go into — some are obvious enough — we have decided not to take advantage of this generous offer and so we propose to take no interviews and to carry on as we are. Need I say how much I would like to see you and others again? But it is better to hold ourselves in patience and wait for the day, distant or otherwise, when we can meet in more normal circumstances. I have written to Betty and informed her of our decision. Will you tell *Puphi* also? She is thinking of going to America and both she and I would have liked to see each other before she goes. But there are so many things that we want to do and yet cannot and sometimes deliberately refrain from doing. That is all part of this game of life and we must accept it with good humour even when it hurts.

We were supposed to have interviews with those to whom we are allowed to write. That means, so far as I am concerned, you and *Puphi* and Betty and Amina. Amma had also better be informed, though I suppose there was hardly any chance of her travelling two thousand miles in her present state of ill-health in order to have a brief interview with me.

So that is that!

I see from the papers that Kailas and Sheila are returning at last with their two babies. I suppose they will travel *via* the Mediterranean. They ought to reach India early in November —

I have sent you back the following books & pamphlets:

- 1 Shakespeare's Works, Vol. IX
- 2 Gustav Stolper: *This Age of Fable*

- 3 *Mahabharata* — abridged
- 4 *Dayananda and the Indian Problem*
- 5 Stalin's Report No. 17
- 6 *Peace Front and People's War*
- 7 Stalin : *War of Liberation*
- 8 Earl Browden : *Victory and After*
- 9 Orel
- 10 Kharkov
- 11 Sebastopol
- 12 *France Fights for Freedom*
- 13 *A New Germany in Birth*
- 14 *Spotlight on Yugoslavia*
- 15 I.L.O. *Man-power Mobilisation for Peace*

Also some periodicals.

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 85.

October 22, Sunday

What a bloody fool Mahmud has been! For the last few days I have hardly dared to open a newspaper lest some sapient remark of his or something about him should upset me. Gradually the facts are coming out but the picture is still very vague and incomplete. It seems obvious, however, that he wrote to Govt. early in Sept.—the famous sealed letter—in which he said all manner of foolish things—Govt., taking advantage of these assurances and attempts to clear himself, released him as one who repented.

All manner of little incidents of the past months now stand out and assume a new significance. His attempt to send a letter of resignation from the W.C. to the Maulana six months ago—both being in prison and the W.C. an illegal organization! It was as a consequence of this that I flared up then and said many hard things to him resulting in our relations becoming strained. What was the purpose of this step, I had asked him then, except to lay the foundations for some other step? What was this? He gave me no answer. I have no doubt now that he intended informing his son about it through one of his letters and thus indirectly informing Govt. It is evident that he wrote much to his son

with this intention. Some of this was even published and Sendak mentioned then that the officers in his mess referred to it saying that it was evidence of our 'cracking up'.

Bapu's release and the various steps he took possibly led Mahmud to postpone further activities. But when month after month went by and he saw no chance of release, he wrote direct to Govt. — not telling us anything about it.

If all this is not cowardly, sneaky and lying behaviour I do not know what it is. It was open to him to change his opinion, or confess his weakness, but to act behind our backs and imagine that he was being very clever — this is more than I could have expected of any man I call a friend or comrade. One false step leads to another and slippery slope becomes steeper.

What will people outside think? Can anyone possibly conceive that he acted in this manner without reference to Maulana and me? Without, in fact, any mention of it to us? Some may even think that we partly approved of it, but certainly everyone will think that we knew about it.

What must he have told Bapu and others? Lies, lies, lies or what is even worse, an atom of truth with a mass of lies covering it. Not the youngest and most immature of our volunteers could have acted thus.

x x x x

I was reading today Plato—*The Last Days of Socrates*—*The Apology, Crito* &c.⁵⁶³ I felt strangely comforted and my anger against Mahmud lessened.

23-10-1944

Darling Nan,⁵⁶⁴

I owe you three letters, that is to say I have received three letters from you since I wrote to you last on Oct. 5th. Your three letters are dated 4th Oct., 8th Oct., (from Sevagram), and 14th Oct. which came last evening. With my last letter I returned Chand's and Tara's letters. The snapshots of the girls reached me some time back. I am keeping them unless you want them. Rita's photograph is also with me.

563. The trial and condemnation of Socrates on charges of heresy and corrupting the minds of the young and Plato's defence of him are conveyed in these books.

564. File No: 3590/H/II-2, Maharashtra Government Records, Police Commissioner's Office.

This continuing search of a name for the babe is becoming rather pointless. We seem to be losing ourselves in a sea of suggestions and there is no end to the attractive names that can be found in our old literature. If this kind of thing goes on much longer we shall have to call the babe the Nameless or the one with innumerable names. I think it is time we pitched our tent somewhere and fixed on a name or names. Otherwise fresh suggestions will continue to pour in. Rajiva Ratna is a good name and the more I repeat it the better it sounds. As Indu and you and Betty like it, why not fix upon it? As for a second name, if Indu approves, Brijees may be chosen.

I am not particularly anxious to see the babe soon. I feel rather uncomfortable with tiny babes; they seem so soft and delicate, and I am a little afraid of hurting them with my uncouth ways. After the first six months they become more solid, can sit properly and it is possible to treat them as human beings.

Your excitement about a possible interview with me was premature. When I first heard of interviews being allowed it was all very vague then and no official intimation had reached us—my immediate emotional reaction to it was not to take them. This had little to do with any reasons or with any particular conditions attached to them, though reasons subsequently confirmed that first reaction. I wrote immediately to Betty and asked her to let you know. Why did I react in this way? After all I have taken interviews in prison previously and it is just possible that if interviews had been permitted from the time of our arrest and confinement on this occasion, we might have accepted them and adapted ourselves to them though I must say that I have never liked the idea of jail interviews. Somehow it brings home the idea of enforced confinement and being subjected to others' wills even more than the confinement itself. That idea is a constant irritant. What one might have done more than two years ago I do not know. But after being deprived of even this abnormal and strictly limited human intercourse for nearly two years and a quarter, a period during which much has happened and layer upon layer of thought and passion and painful sensation have accumulated in memory's chambers, it is very different with me. It may be I have hardened; certainly I have changed, as we all change with the passing of years. So it is not a question of any particular condition attached to an interview but a reaction to everything as a whole. I do not fancy being treated like a wild beast in a cage with occasional rope allowed so that I can move a few feet if I behave myself. I dislike being the plaything of others and to have my movements and my emotional life regulated by others. Where force prevents me from acting as I wish, I have to accept it, but I prefer to

retain such freedom of mind and action as I possess. If it has been thought fit and proper to prevent us from seeing even those we care for during these 2½ years or so, well and good; anyway perforce I had to adapt myself to it. But I see no reason why I should adapt myself to all the new vagaries of those who keep us in prison or to stabilise myself in new positions. It pleases me to reject crumbs of relief, if relief they can be called. Thus I have a sensation of not only being the ruler of my mind but, up to some extent, even my actions.

Perhaps all this is mere emotion or pride. I do not deny it, nor do I think this a failing of which I should rid myself. Anyway, whether it is a virtue or failing, it is part of me and governs my life.

I would love to see you all but I would rather do so in the normal conditions of life and not in the narrow, constrained, prying atmosphere of a jail office. I have so much to see, so much to feel, so much to say — how could I do this in a jail interview? I wondered how I would feel if I saw those I cared for and heard dear and remembered voices again. Normally, outside we would adapt ourselves to each other soon enough, even though we might discover many changes and new aspects and features. But here or in any prison, I would hardly be able to say what I had in mind for I would be overwhelmed with the things I had to say and at the same time trying to find out what the other was like, what would be appropriate and what not so. Would then, I wondered, all that I had to say remain unsaid and I sit dumbly and confused? Probably not for I do not function that way, but there would be a fever of excitement and feverish ways of talking which would cover up and hide what lay in the mind.

Yet do not imagine that I am unhappy for that is not so, and I find many ways and many by-lanes where peace and mental delight are to be found. Necessarily I live often in dreamland, almost forgetting the reality of things here. Not so much an ivory tower business for I am too much connected with life and activity to look at my own pale reflection. Yet it is curious how thin is the line that divides happiness from unhappiness, like that faint line which divides life from death.

You will go to America and be far away for some months. My mind of course will picture you on the other side of the world. And yet for all practical purposes you have been as far away, as unapproachable and unattainable, during these past two years and more. If you lived in Ahmadnagar itself you would still be as far. And yet very near wherever you might be. For this sensation of nearness and farness is of the mind and the feelings. If we do not know each other well, we are strangers however often we may meet; even if we know each other in many ways and yet do not fit into each other, even then we continue

as strangers unable to see and understand each other. Here I have been for this long while living in the enforced intimacy of prison life with others. Some I have grown to know better, others seem further away and far more difficult for me to understand, or perhaps more understanding has revealed greater differences in our outlook on life. Prison has a way of magnifying our traits and suppressed habits of thought and living; sometimes it strengthens our virtues, more often it magnifies our failings and our spirit of intolerance. For over a year Mahmud and I shared a room here. There are not enough rooms for each one to have a separate one and so some of us had to share rooms. At first I had a room to myself. Then we had a fresh shuffle and I decided to share with Mahmud as he was unwell and I thought I might be of some service to him. Our room was a big one but it does make a difference whether one has a room of one's own or not.

How little we know of each other and even a lifetime may fail to give us insight into another. And yet a word, an act, a gesture suddenly enlightens us like a flash of lightning. I had known Mahmud as well as one can usually know another. Yet I was continually discovering how different we were from each other mentally, intellectually, emotionally, spiritually. In spite of our liking for each other there was so little in common. What interested me produced no response in him, what interested him bored me or even irritated me. So it came to this that we had little to talk about apart from the necessities of daily life. For many months we hardly had a conversation. And so he was really further removed from me even though we shared a room, than many persons whom I had not seen for years. He must have told you, if you have met him, of our superficial daily life here, but of the things that count, so far as I am concerned, probably you could tell him far more than he could tell you. For though you may not see me you can understand me from letters, while he and I live far apart in private universes of our own.

It will be a pity if you do not see Malabar. You have never been there so far as I know. Not from the point of view of relief work but of seeing a lovely corner of India which so few of us in the North know. We talk and think of India so much and yet how little we know even her physical appearance, much less her spirit and her memories past, so full of dreams and many-sided activity, of adventures of the mind and body. I am sorry I have not been able to go to Malabar oftener. But I carry with me the memory of the beauty of its backwaters, those tongues of the sea that creep and wind far inland with their wooded banks and green and thickly covered little islands. I remember journeying with Kamala and Indu over their still waters as the

evening deepened to night and the moonlight shimmered over the surface, with the silence broken only by the soft sound of the oars dipping into the waters. Does Indu remember, I wonder? Tell her of these lines:

Un soir, t'en souvient-il? Nous voguions en silence;
On n'entendait au loin, sur l'onde et sous les cieux,
Que le bruit des rameurs qui frappaient en cadence
Tes flots harmonieux.⁵⁶⁵

Will you tell Indu to send me, when she sends another packet, Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*? She will find it in Anand Bhawan. I want to read it again.

And so all my love to you whether you are in Allahabad or far America.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

October 26, Thursday

So the Mahmud mystery is solved. His (secretly-sent) letter to the Viceroy has been published together with a statement by him & a characteristic note⁵⁶⁶ by Gandhiji.

What astonishing stupidity it reveals—lack of the most ordinary intelligence & sense. And servility & whining & suppression of truth and at least two falsehoods—though possibly, in his excited state of mind, he might have imagined much.

I felt humiliated & ashamed that one whom I had considered a friend & a colleague should have behaved thus. And yet in spite of the tragedy of it all, it was so comic, so utterly ridiculous.

Anyway it is over and there is some feeling of relief that we have not been dragged into it.

x x x x

Bapu again contemplating a fast!

565. One evening, do you remember?, we were sailing noiselessly; we only heard far off, on the water and beneath the skies, the sound of rowers rhythmically striking the melodious waves.

566. In a statement Mahatma Gandhi asked Congressmen to read without passion Syed Mahmud's letter to the Government. "For me in spite of his indiscretion, he remains the same dear friend he has been since the Khilafat days."

Oct. 28, 1944

Darling Indu,

I received your letter of the 20th Oct. (No. 84) yesterday after a rather long letterless interval. I realized how fully occupied you must have been with baby and the house after your return home. Baby must of course prove a hand-full and a mind-full. That is the way of babies. He is already nine weeks old and I suppose in another month or two he will begin to behave a little more reasonably.

As for the name, I think you should stick to Rajiva Ratna राजीव रत्न. It is a good name. As a second name you can have Birjees बिर्जीस, if you like it. So that the names would be राजीव रत्न बिर्जीस though normally only the first name will be used. It is desirable, I think, to have a Persian name and the one Maulana suggested sounds well and has a good meaning and old associations.

There is one other suggestion regarding names that I am making though I am not myself sure about its desirability. What about adding 'Nehru' as an additional name? I do not mean that he should have a double-barrelled name—Nehru-Gandhi. That sounds silly and is in fact a little absurd. But just as a separate name which is not used normally but is there. It is really a matter of sentiment. On the other hand, if this is added, the full name becomes long & pompous—राजीव रत्न बिर्जीस नेहरू गांधी. Perhaps it is worthwhile having it thus in a formal kind of way but not for use of course—But do as you & Feroze think fit.

'Nehru' has no meaning and is derived, as family names often are, from some place name. Hence it is not tied up with any particular spelling. In Urdu there is no difficulty because Urdu writing is vague and rather unscientific and can be read in a variety of ways. Thus it is written نېرو. In Hindi, which is more precise, a difficulty arises and the exact sound of the name cannot be reproduced as there is no such sound in the script. That sound is somewhere in between नेहरू and नैहरू⁵⁶⁷—Dadu, who seldom wrote his name in Hindi, used the नैहरू form. I came to the conclusion that नेहरू was a nearer approach and therefore more correct. I have therefore been using this form. You are however cussed enough to write नैहरू. Last evening I had a discussion with Narendra Deva and he agreed that नैहरू was not suitable as it sounds like Naihru, and that नेहरू was better. In Latin script we have got used to Nehru though it is not very correct and

567. Nehru and Naihru.

leads foreigners to pronounce it in all manner of ways. But we have to stick to it. I have recently been reading a book by an American scholar in the Persian language. With a scholar's perversity he insists on writing names as he thinks they should be written and not as in fact they are being written now. He even changes people's personal names using diacritical marks to indicate the correct pronunciations. (If you do not know the word 'diacritical' you should look it up in the dictionary. You should know it.) I suppose owing to the insufficiency of the Latin alphabet some such marks are necessary for accurate representations of sounds. But they are rather irritating, especially in names. They cannot be avoided in transliterating Sanskrit or Arabic &c. This American writes Makkah for Mecca, and wants to write al-Qahira for Cairo though his courage fails him. The Maulana's name is written by him as Abū-l Kalām Āzād. My name he insists on writing as Jawāhar Lāl Nāhru, well-knowing of course how I write it. In dealing with Indian names he gets into a difficulty in his index, which is not surprising as most of these names have no fixed family designations. In some despair he exclaims: 'Forms such as Rahim, Sir Abdur and S.A. Lateef must make anyone shudder who has a reverence for either God or grammar.'

As a matter of fact 'Nahrū' is not right. It is just an attempt to transliterate in Latin characters the Urdu نہرو. The nearest approach seems to me to be Neharu. But we need not worry about scholars' ways and perversities. 'Nehrū' is there and will remain there.

So much for names — The books you have sent — or Betty — have not yet come but are expected in a day or two.

I have already written to you that we do not propose to take interviews. I wrote to Betty also and to *Puphi*. Betty had apparently applied for an interview before she got my letter and yesterday I was formally informed that the interview had been allowed. But of course it is not going to take place now as I do not choose to allow it or any other interview.

There appears to be some misunderstanding as to the reason for our not taking interviews. There was even a comment in a Bombay paper suggesting that this might be due to some condition relating to searches of those who came to interview. This is not correct. Jail interviews are always somewhat humiliating, or, at any rate, I have found them so. But apart from the inevitable accompaniments and atmosphere surrounding them, there is, so far as we know, no special conditions attached to them here. There is no question of personal searches. Nevertheless we have decided not to have interviews. The reason? Well, to put it briefly, all that has happened during the past twenty-

six & a half months. If during this long and dreary period the normal human accompaniments of even jail life were not considered suitable for us, in spite of tragedy and other painful happenings, we can do without them now and for the future.

I am enclosing a few seeds of a creeper which has flourished exceedingly here. It came accidentally as a seedling and we pushed it into the ground. It has since spread out to about 40 feet and is a perennial. It gives clusters of small pink flowers. I do not know the name but Asaf Ali says it is called in Hindustani—*Qumquma* कुमकुमा. I am not at all sure that these seeds will yield any results. But try them. They take time.

I wrote to you a week or fortnight ago that the rains had ended. I was premature. They have continued and are still continuing. October is evidently the most rainy month here, after June.

Love

Your loving
Papu

I have just received the books from Bombay as well as the *Persian Grammar* &c. I shall send a list next week.

This is my letter No. 86.

31-10-1944

Darling Betty,

How fortunate you are to feel on your eleventh wedding anniversary fresh and friendly with life. The feeling has grown in me that life for all its vagaries offers us ultimately what we seek from it, or rather what we are capable of receiving from its inexhaustible storehouse. In a sense it mirrors our capacity and our temperaments. If our interests are sufficiently varied we can find in it all the variety we can appreciate and absorb. If we live in a narrow shell, life for us assumes that shape and context. It can be superficial or deep as we choose to see it and sense it; it can be full of adventure or dull and conventional and narrow in scope, fitting in with our own mental horizon. Life ultimately is a series of mental perceptions and sensations; it enters and fills us to the extent we have open windows to our minds and spirits. External factors, which we cannot control, affect it of course greatly, but there is always this possibility of rising above them and not allowing them to suppress us; and indeed of making them the means of giving us further insight and experience of life.

About interviews, I was informed the other day that you had applied for one, together with Raja, Nan and Rita, and that permission had been given — the date to be fixed by the Superintendent here. It was obvious that you had done so before you had received my last letter. I informed the authority concerned that my decision not to have an interview held good.

I am glad the boys are shaping well, physically and mentally. How different they will be when I see them.

Love,

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

Nov. 4, 1944

Darling Indu,

As I mentioned in a note to my last letter to you I have received the books you sent — two are *Persian* and Ajwani's *Introducing India*. I have also received the following books from Betty:

- 1 Davies : *Mission to Moscow*
- 2 Agnes Smedley : *Battle Hymn of China*
- 3 Christine Weston : *Indigo*
- 4 S. I. Hsiang : *Lady Precious Stream*
- 5 Julian Huxley : *On Living in a Revolution*
- 6 Huxley & others : *Reshaping Man's Heritage*

Indigo struck me as a very well-written book. I remember your writing to me that someone did not think much of it. It is always difficult to judge of books dealing with Indian themes for our wishes often colour our judgments, as do the writer's. All we can expect is a clear and more or less sincere presentation of the writer's viewpoint and impressions. I think *Indigo* fulfils this test. It is a very limited picture of Indian life, or rather of Anglo-Indian life, a generation or more ago. This generation has seen so much in the way of change that even the recent past seems distant and difficult of conception.

I am at present reading Agnes Smedley's book. It is extraordinarily good thus far and powerful in a restrained (but not always) kind of way. The writing is simple, clear, unadorned and without any frills but it is full of the writer's passion.

Some little time ago I wrote to *Puphi* to ask you to send me Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*. I think you will find it somewhere in the library. I have rather suddenly developed a desire to read it again.

Do you remember my writing to you about my old cigarette-holder? I should like to have it if you can find it. It was kept in a drawer of my dressing table.

Your next birthday will take place a fortnight hence. Perhaps my next letter may be too late for it and so this letter carries with it an additional load of love and good wishes. I want you to buy a birthday present on my behalf. For this I enclose a cheque for Rs. 100/-.

The cheque is on the Punjab National Bank, Allahabad, but I am not at all sure that I have any money in my account there. I think you might ask Bachhraj to transfer Rs. 500/- to my account with the Punjab National Bank, Allahabad branch.

I am enclosing a few seeds of a rather attractive variety of sunflower. The flowers are rather like large chrysanthemums.

It is growing pleasant here now. Presumably the rains are over at last, though one never knows.

My normal pen (Shaeffer's) having come to grief (temporarily I hope), I have sent it to Betty for repairs. I am now using the pen Johnson gave me. You will notice a change in the handwriting.

Yesterday I read of the death of Bertram Keightley⁵⁶⁸ in Allahabad at the age of 85. I wonder if you knew him at all. Probably not. He is one of my earliest memories for he used to come to stay with us when I was a child. When I was at Harrow sometimes I used to receive my allowance through him. This was a convenient method for he wanted money in India and took it from *Dadu*, and then sent a cheque to me on his London bank. Always he used to sit, spread out on an easychair, smoking cigars continually and reading book after book — chiefly novels. He used to receive parcels of books from England every week.

Love to you & Feroze & the babe —

This is my letter No. 87.

Your loving
Papu

November 7, Tuesday

For the last ten days or more there have been rumours of our transfer. Indeed the Jailer said we were bound to be transferred within a month,

568. A leading theosophist and educationist, who was active in England and India; was general secretary of the Theosophical Society for some years.

the principal reason apparently being that Govt. wanted to close this camp. This may happen — And yet I rather doubt it. The Supdt. says we would have been transferred but for our decision not to take interviews.

Hardly anyone of us looks forward to a transfer. Living in a jail, as we are bound to do if we are transferred, will be a change for the worse in every way. The only advantage might have been in interviews and as we have rejected these, even that advantage goes. Anyway, it really does not matter much either way, whether we are transferred or not —

x x x x

Mahmud has done one good thing at least. He has released to the press Maulana's letter to Linlithgow sent in February 1943.

x x x x

I have started Persian with the help of Maulana and Otto's *Grammar*. I wonder how long I shall continue. I do not take kindly to languages. Still it will help in various ways —

x x x x

Today is the American presidential election & the anniversary of the Soviet Revolution.

November 11, Saturday

Yesterday there was an unusual occurrence. Sendak, the Supdt., came with a parcel, unopened and sealed, and said he had instructions to deliver it to me without opening it. Further that the censor of the Bombay Secretariat had also not opened it. I opened the parcel in Sendak's presence — There were three books in it and a letter. Two of the books were by Edward Thompson and the third was Wavell's anthology of poetry.⁵⁶⁹ Sendak was suitably impressed with Thompson's importance — that books sent by him for me should be treated in this superior way. He did not see the letter, or rather did not know who it was from. I did not tell him.

The letter was from Wavell. He said that Thompson had sent two books for me which he was forwarding — also a message about his illness. Edward had been very ill and was still in a bad way. A big operation yielding no results. Then a special treatment had done him

569. *Other Men's Flowers* (1944).

some good and he was hoping to recover, but was likely to remain a permanent invalid. Also news of his two sons in the army.

Wavell added that as Thompson had said that I was interested in poetry, he (Wavell) was sending me his anthology. His letter was to be treated as entirely private 'in view of our respective positions.'

Letters are often self-revealing. They give us some insight into the writer. Wavell's letter was a good one and indicated the decency of the man.

I wondered what I should do. How was I to acknowledge it? Or should I acknowledge it at all? It seemed that any attempt to do so would inevitably broadcast the fact that the Viceroy had written to me and I did not want this to happen.

Also, should I inform my colleagues? Not all of them certainly for this would inevitably result in all manner of gossip. Few of them would appreciate the motive underlying Wavell's letter and would draw unwarranted conclusions. Yet not to inform them might also lead to complications subsequently. I decided to tell Maulana and possibly Vallabhbhai.

Ultimately I changed my mind about Vallabhbhai & decided not to mention the matter to him. I spoke only to Maulana & Pantji. I have also written a brief note to the Secy., Home Dept., Bombay Govt. asking him to convey to the Private Secy. of the Viceroy that I have received the three books and the message about Thompson's health and that I appreciate & am grateful for the courtesy. This was vague enough not to tell anybody much and at the same time was some kind of an acknowledgement.

11-11-1944

TO THE SECRETARY, HOME DEPARTMENT (POLITICAL),
BOMBAY GOVERNMENT⁵⁷⁰

Dear Sir,

Will you kindly convey to the Private Secretary to the Viceroy that I have received the three books and the message about Dr. Edward Thompson's health. I appreciate and am grateful for this courtesy.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

November 11, 1944

Darling Indu,

November is well on its way and it is pleasant. There is a nip in the air and the sun is losing its ferocity and becoming a mild and soothing companion. New birds appear. What a delightful month it is in India or rather in North India. Allahabad must be having its गुलाबी सर्दी⁵⁷¹ as they call it, that mild cold weather, which is neither really cold nor warm and yet is exhilarating and freshening. Ahmadnagar, though situated in the South, is on some kind of a plateau — its altitude is I think about 2000 ft. — and is therefore cooler than the surrounding country. It is never really cold here as in the North, but it is not so hot either and on the whole it has an agreeable climate. I rather miss the cold of the North. Anyway this is a pleasant and cheerful month here and I react to it accordingly. I hope the little one is enjoying this month and adapting himself to the cooler climate. I am sure this cold weather in Allahabad will do him a lot of good. Some of us were wise enough to be born in November.

I have received two books sent by Edward Thompson — *Burmese Silver* and *100 Poems* — and a message about his ill-health. He has been very ill, had a severe operation in March last for the removal of some kind of a growth, and was supposed to have been cured. But the trouble recurred and was found to be inoperable. The radio-therapists told him that there was no help for it. But then a new technique was tried on him and this treatment, although very painful and weakening, has produced a marked change and he hopes to recover. But it seems as if he was likely to be a permanent invalid. There was some news also about his sons on the battlefronts.

I am very sorry to learn about Thompson's illness. I should like you to write to him and tell him that I have received his two books and am happy to have them. I hope that his recovery to health will continue and that he will be well again.

Could you send me two tubes of Bengue's Balsam (I am not sure about the name). You should find at least 4 tubes in the cupboard in my bathroom. This is good for pains and sometimes my hand gives me trouble. Send me 2 tubes only. This Balsam is often useful and you should keep it by you.

I see that *Puphi* has got her passport and her visa. So now she has only to wait for her passage and this may be fixed up at any time. Tell

571. *Gulabi Sardi*.

her to let me know the address to which letters for her should be sent. I hope she realizes that America will be very cold indeed in December and subsequent months.

This is my letter No. 88.

Love

Your loving
Papu

14-11-1944

Darling Betty,

Your letter of the 6th came yesterday. Also the books. Thank you. Both of them are very welcome and will interest me, especially *Pre-Buddhist India*.⁵⁷² It seems to be a scholarly treatment of a period we know little about. I do not fancy the title of Munshi's book⁵⁷³ but that of course is not a criticism of the book. Yet it indicates a pompous approach to a historical subject which should be dealt with in a lesser key. Munshi has a habit of using ornate and rather flamboyant language which sounds well at times but does not seem to possess too much meaning. I am referring chiefly to some of his reported speeches which have been a source of some amusement to us. Perhaps he controls himself a little more in his written work.

Some ten days ago or more I sent you my Shaeffer fountain pen for repairs. This is my favourite pen and I think I have used it now almost continuously for ten years or so. The nib just suits me. I possess two other pens but they are not suitable and it is something of a trial to use them for any length of time. So I would like the Shaeffer to be repaired and sent back to me, if that can be done. The nib itself is in good condition. It is the pumping apparatus that has gone wrong. For some time past this was not functioning properly. Now it is broken — that is the rod inside has become detached from the end rubber piece or whatever it is. I suppose it can be repaired.

Yesterday I received the dainty box containing 12 handkerchiefs.

572. By Ratilal N. Mehta; the book presents a connected idea of ancient Indian life as portrayed in the Jataka stories.

573. *Akhand Hindustan* (1942), a collection of articles and speeches dealing with the unity of India which, in the author's words, "is not only to be felt, but visualised, worked for, if need be, fought for".

Will you thank Bul, Naju⁵⁷⁴ and the G.S.S.? Whatever else I may lack here, there is no chance of my being short of handkerchiefs. All my old clothes have gone to pieces, have had to be renewed, and then again have been reduced to tatters. The process of renewal is a constant one. This rapid wearing away and tearing is I suppose partly due to the bad quality of the khadi as well as to the extreme vigour of the dhobi who deals with them. Perhaps also to the presence of fairly large quantities of chlorine in the water. But the handkerchiefs last. I do not trust them to the professional dhobis. They are washed here and they continue to give good service. The stuff is stronger too. So I have an ample supply of them.

I am writing this on my birthday. Why this particular day should have a greater importance than any other I do not know. And yet inevitably one treats it as a landmark in life's journey — a halting place from which one looks back and forward.

Give my love and thanks to all our friends who have remembered me on this occasion and sent me their greetings.

Love,

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

November 17, Friday

Another birthday has come and gone and I am 55. It was my fifth consecutive birthday in prison.

Sendak brought a cake and our Marwari friend in Ahmadnagar, Fero-dia, who sometimes sends fruits, also sent a cake and a big pie — a mixed chicken & vegetable affair with a most appetising smell. So we had a feast and invited Sendak & the Jailer to it.

Pantji as usual arranged for garlands and bouquets. Rukwa, the convict who helps in the pantry, fixed up a kind of छाता⁵⁷⁵ of paper with flowers tacked on to it — rather an effective piece of work. He did this entirely of his own accord—

x

x

x

x

574. Naju Dastur, a full-time worker for the promotion of khadi.

575. *Chhata*—Canopy.

Mahtab signalised my birthday by breaking the little finger of his left hand — a fracture — in playing volleyball! He had to be taken to the military hospital the next morning for an X-ray and plastering up.

x x x x

Reading the various messages in the papers on the occasion of my birthday I was greatly moved by some, especially by Edward Thompson's.⁵⁷⁶ What an affection he has developed for me! Why, I have often wondered. What has he discovered in me to attract him so much? Do I deserve all this love and faith that so many pour on me?

x x x x

Today's papers bring the news of the death of Edward's son — It is reported that he was shot by the Germans in Bulgaria in June last. He was working with the Bulgarian partisans, a dangerous job for which he had volunteered. Only a week ago I had news of him in Edward's message which Wavell forwarded. He had "apparently disappeared into the blue on some secret mission and is unable to write." He had a more conclusive reason for not writing for he was dead. He died in June and Edward's letter to Wavell was dated Sept. 19th.

How proud Edward was of this son of his — I remember his telling me of his brilliance, his linguistic attainments and his lovable qualities. He was a boy who had just gone to Oxford with a scholarship. Edward added then — all for cannon fodder! He proved right.

The second and younger son is serving in the army in Italy.

What a terrible blow it must be for Edward. My heart goes out to him and I feel very depressed.

I have taken my measurements today — Nov. 17, 1944. Compare them with previous figures on p. 44, 230, & p. 311 of journal (4) A.F. dates 20/12/42, 10/8/43, & 21/11/43 — Blood pressure on p. 330 & at end of this book.

On 17/11/44	Weight	— 127 pounds
	Chest	— 32-35½ (normal) —
		— 36½ expanded
	Waist	— 28-30
	Hips	— 34½

576. It read: "It is very hard to know what to say about my dear friend Jawaharlal. As my message, I send you, Jawaharlal, the assurance given to a Hebrew prophet: 'O man greatly beloved, peace be unto thee, be strong; yes, be strong. Go thou the way till the end be, for thou shalt rest in thy lot at the end of the day'."

Thigh	20—(at mark 18)
Calf	12½
Upperarm	stretched 11½, bent 12
Forearm	9½
Wrist	6½
Neck	14

No marked changes since last November.

Nov. 18, 1944

Darling Indu,

It is a little over three weeks since I had a letter from you. I suppose Rajiva keeps you pretty well occupied and the multifarious new duties following motherhood fill the day and tire you. That is inevitable at this stage and so I do not expect you to be very regular in your letter writing. I should, however, like to have news of Rajiva. *Puphi* mentioned in a letter she sent from Lucknow that he had been vaccinated and his arm had swollen up. He must have been unwell and very restless and requiring constant attention. I hope he has got over this completely and is now well and prospering. In another two days he will be three months old. More and more he will resemble a human being. Can he sit up now without support? I should like to have a good picture of him to find out how he is growing and what he looks like now.

I have received two books, apparently under your instructions: *Gandhiji*—the anniversary volume—and Laski's *Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time*.⁵⁷⁷ Have you purchased Laski's book or has it been borrowed from someone? I ask this as I have found some passages in it marked in pencil.

Last week I wrote to you that I had received some books from Edward Thompson and also a message about his illness. There was some brief information about his sons also. The younger one was serving in the army in Italy, the elder one was, it was stated, on

577. Laski's argument in this book was "if we have failed by armistice to lay the foundation of a revolution by consent, we shall pass rapidly to a position where, because men no longer hold the great ends of life in common, they will be unable to agree upon the methods of social change. In that event, the reorganisation of our basic principles will not be capable of accomplishment by peaceful means and the final disposition of force will be determined, not by discussions but by violence".

some secret mission and no letter had come from him for some time. Yesterday I read in the papers of the death in June last of this elder son. He was working then with the partisans in Bulgaria — a dangerous job. There was thus a sufficient reason for his not writing to his father for he had been dead for many months. The news has distressed me greatly though such things must happen in war. He was a very bright boy — his school & college record had been thus far brilliant — and his father was tremendously proud of him. And yet, even in 1938, Thompson was obsessed with the thought of the coming war and used to say that all their bright young men were destined to die in them — just cannon fodder they were. The death must be a great blow to him. The younger son was at school in 1938. He wrote me a letter once from school.

Is it possible to write or cable to France now? If so I should like to have news of Louise Morin and Jean Jacques — also of Nanu. How people disappear from our lives behind the black curtain of war!

Puphi is, I understand, busy with her passages and her priorities. I was astounded to learn from her letter that an air passage from India to New York in an American plane costs \$ 900. If that is the kind of price one has to pay for air travel in the future, then I am afraid there is little chance of my indulging in it, much as I prefer it to other methods of transport.

This is my letter No. 89.

Love

From your loving
Papu

November 25, 1944

Darling Indu,

I have your letter of the 14th Nov. — No. 85. I am glad to learn that Rajiva is progressing and keeping well. Give the old boy my love.

A few days ago I wrote to Amma to Lahore. The very next day I read in the papers that Kailas had reached Bombay and was proceeding to Allahabad. There was no mention of Sheila or the children but I presume they were all together. They must have changed considerably during these past five and a half years. I suppose Kailas is settling down in Lucknow.

As usual, I received a dozen fine handkerchiefs from Bul and the G.S.S. for my birthday. In acknowledging them to Betty I mentioned that only my handkerchiefs lasted here and the other clothes went to pieces at short intervals and had to be replaced. The dhobi who washes our clothes has a way with him and few things survive his onslaughts. Perhaps this wearing away and tearing are also due to the presence of a good deal of chlorine in the water. Also the khadi I have been getting has been definitely bad. But the handkerchiefs last as I do not trust the dhobi with them and have them washed here. Betty immediately threatened to send me some *kurtas* &c. I do not want these for the simple reason that I do not wear them. About two years ago I took to wearing shorts and shirts with open collars and half-sleeves. I find these much more comfortable and lighter. All my *kurtas* and pyjamas lie in my boxes unused. Once or twice I tried to go back to them but I did not like the change and reverted to the more abbreviated attire. Partly also because the old clothes do not fit me now; they hang and pull. They were not well made to begin with and now I have grown somewhat thinner. The pyjamas (I use buttons on them) stay up with difficulty. I have a good mind to send you back a boxful of these old clothes. It is a nuisance to keep unnecessary articles here and have to air and sun them frequently to get rid of crickets and cock-roaches.

I think I shall send a sample pair of my shorts and shirts to Betty so that she can have more made after that pattern.

Puphi and Rita must have sailed for America though I have not seen any mention of this in the papers. Perhaps they are still in Bombay. The cost of travelling — at any rate long distance journeys — seems to have gone up so much that it seems to have become a luxury for the rich. Even when I have the chance to do so, I fear I shall have to restrain and limit my wanderlust. The idea of spending weeks and months on the sea bores me, and air journeys are frightfully expensive. Anyway there are the Himalayas always waiting to receive me.

You wrote to me that you had arranged to pay Feroze 100/- a month from my account for relief work. But you did not say anything about the additional sum of Rs. 1000/- which I asked you to give him for this purpose — Have you fixed this up? Besides this do not hesitate to draw upon my account whenever Feroze thinks it necessary for his work. I am anxious about this.

Here are the names of three books — two of them quite recent — which you might note down. When available, if at all, they might be sent. But do not go out of your way for them. Perhaps I have already mentioned one of them in a previous letter:

Somerset Maugham	: <i>The Razor's Edge</i>
Gerald Heard	: <i>Man the Master</i>
Olaf Stapledon	: <i>Sirius</i>
Love	

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 90.

28-11-1944

Darling Bets,

Thank you — or rather thank Raja — for sending me his Shaeffer pen. This is good, though perhaps just a tiny bit too fine for much writing. But that is a small matter. I am using it now.

Yes, some time or other we shall also go to America and to many other places. But I dislike the idea of spending weeks and weeks on the sea, and it appears that air travelling is frightfully expensive. Anyway I can always go to the Himalayas or even across to Mansarovar!

I am glad to learn of Spark's⁵⁷⁸ offspring. They must be lovely. I cannot think of suitable names for them but Anthony and Cleopatra seem rather uncalled for. Surely there is no lack of good Indian names, even though I cannot suggest them. There was a famous pair of lovers in Gujrat (or was it Malwa?) — Baz Bahadur and Rupmati. For love of each other they let their kingdom go to pieces and many popular songs and legends still remind us of them. What about Baz and Rup? I do not particularly fancy the names but as they have just struck me I am suggesting them to you and Raja.

Love to you and Raja and all our friends

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

578. Krishna Hutheesing's retriever.

Dec. 2, 1944

Darling Indu,

I have your letter of the 24th Nov. Raja has sent me his Shaeffer fountain pen and so I can write to you a less messy letter than my last one. The pen writes well and smoothly though it is rather small and lady-like. I have got used to thicker varieties, something I can grasp firmly. Betty suggested sending me a gold or silver-tipped new Parker—the only ones available in the market—but I have asked her not to send it. A shining and aggressive top would probably distract my mind when writing. I am adequately provided with pens now to carry on my normal work.

I do not know yet what has happened to *Puphi* and Rita—whether they have sailed and are on the high seas or are still waiting patiently in Bombay for something to happen.

It was rather foolish of Kailas and Sheila to go to Allahabad without informing you beforehand and then to spend the night at the station. I can well understand how they must have changed during these past five years and a half—We have all changed a good bit. For them the conditions were in some respects harder and the environment was quite new, especially in wartime. Is Kailas going to live in the little house in Lucknow which he used to occupy previously? I suppose Amma will stay with him.

I was surprised to learn that Pyare Kathju had started, along with some others, a Hindi daily in Rajputana. That is hardly in line with his special training. Perhaps that is a side show for him and he will also do some other work.

I am glad Rajiva is getting on well. As for his resembling an early picture of Betty's, my own recollection is that these early photographs of Nan, Betty and you were remarkably alike. In fact it was difficult to distinguish them.

I have been looking through the fat commemoration volume—*Gandhiji*. Usually such volumes are just odd collections of tributes, a mixture of good and bad writing, most of it rather poor. I have found this particular volume singularly well edited and intelligently arranged. The pictures are good, so is the general get-up. Even the articles are above the average and bring out various aspects of the man and his work. I think the editors have done a good job of work and deserve to be congratulated. The price of the book, considering everything, seems to me to be too low—It should have been Rs. 50 at least. Later a cheaper edition could have been brought out.

The cigarette-holder you have sent has not come yet. It will be helpful—You say that the other one (of the kind I have been using) is broken. If the top part of it, that is mouthpiece end, is not broken then this will come in useful here. I can fit it in my other holder.

Is Anna living with you now and helping to look after Rajiva?

Love

Your loving
Papu

December 5. Tuesday

I have another cold and possibly I handed it on to Maulana also. I am recovering. Maulana has had a worse experience and got a touch of 'flu. He is still in its clutches.

So my Persian lessons have been suspended. I have had over a month of these. Progress not quite as good as I had hoped—still something done.

Another bit of work suspended has been my reading out my manuscript (*Discovery of India*) to Maulana. For nearly three weeks I have been doing this. Previously Asaf Ali read through it and made a vast number of suggestions—some good, some not so good. Maulana's suggestions are fewer and almost always in keeping with the general scheme. Asaf's often were really a criticism of the whole background. Anyway all is mass of suggestions and criticism compels me to revise the stuff. Also many new ideas have struck me independently. This process of revision will therefore be more thorough than previously and is likely to take some time—perhaps a month—So far I have only gone through half the MSS with Maulana.

This thought of going back to this work, of after all not having finished it as I had thought I had done, is slightly disconcerting. I do not want release or transfer or any other development to come with any such work unfinished and hanging over. Outside—when I go out—the past should not pull me.

Well there is no reason why I should worry about this. Release seems as distant as ever. Somehow, nearly a year ago, I suggested to Mahmud that we might be released early in 1945—February or so I said. I had no particular reason for it except that on February 8th we shall have been here just 2½ years. That is no reason at all. Yet because I said so

then the approximate date stuck in my mind. I still think it likely that we might be discharged next spring.

x

x

x

x

Nan has reached the U.S. or so I think for she left by air 3 or 4 days ago and it is just a 72-hour journey. Rita has gone by sea under the care of Shiva Rao. I am very glad Nan is there. She will make good. I suppose some news about her will dribble through the cables. She has personality and makes news. I wonder if she will meet Mayling. I suppose she is bound to. But even if she does, she will say little about her. Little can be said. I have thought so often about her and worried. Her strange and distressing stay in America during these terrible months in China is somehow symbolical of China's distress & agony. A tremendously vital person like her to be bottled up in seclusion can only mean a complete nervous breakdown, or a feeling that to remain in China under existing conditions is unbearable or both. As long ago as February 1942 there were marked traces of this nervous tension. She overcame them then and carried on, with a break in the U.S. for two years.

How terribly difficult is the situation in China! Indeed everywhere—Problem, problem, almost insoluble problem everywhere. Perhaps there is no solution in the existing framework anywhere. In Europe as the Allied armies advance trouble breaks out in the liberated countries. Poland⁵⁷⁹—Italy⁵⁸⁰—Belgium⁵⁸¹—Greece⁵⁸²—all on the eve of civil war—Spain⁵⁸³ probably indulging in it already, conflict about future arrangements (air &c.) between England & U.S.A. An inherent conflict and abundant suspicions between the U.S.S.R.—England & the U.S. France a doubtful factor. And then the major problem of Germany! What a mess! It seems that the only thing men understand and can organize well today is war—the problems of peace are still beyond their comprehension.

579. A Polish Committee of National Liberation had been set up at Lublin in opposition to the Polish government in exile in London.

580. The Communists in Italy had won influence in the struggle against the Germans after the Italian surrender in September 1943. While working to establish a united front government with the socialists they were opposed to the liberals, who tried to revive the republican nationalism of the Mazzini tradition.

581. The resisters of the German occupation of Belgium were bitter about those who had collaborated with the enemy. They were opposed to their own armed forces being merged in the regular army.

582. There was division as to whether the monarchy should be restored after liberation.

583. Popular opposition to the dictatorship of General Franco was mounting, with periodic riots by students and strikes by workers

Is it so surprising then that we in India find it difficult to solve our problems? Gandhiji issues statements from time to time and often they are good and even inspiring. And yet somehow they lack some basic reality. Then he begins to talk of another fast, and everybody is worked up emotionally. Rajaji goes on talking, talking imagining that he is the only possessor of a clear head. Yet a clear head can function in a very limited environment and be unable to see beyond. Now the Sapru Committee of jurists and wise men has been formed—What a collection of notables of a bygone age to tackle the problems of this revolutionary epoch! I criticize others. But what would I do myself if I was out? I do not know. Certainly I would not and could not remain passive and silent. Nor could I just repeat old slogans and phrases. What then?

x

x

x

x

Certain answers⁵⁸⁴ given in the Central Assembly about us here have irritated us and led Maulana to write to the Viceroy. Prafulla Babu's condition is deteriorating and the lack of proper treatment is annoying. Yesterday a minor operation was performed on him here without proper equipment—He ought to be in hospital.

x

x

x

x

Today my weight showed a sudden and rather unexpected drop of over 2 pounds in a week. Sendak rather frightened—came and tapped me all over and then pronounced me sound.

x

x

x

x

Kailas and Sheila have at last returned together with two British-born additions to the family aged $3\frac{1}{2}$ years and 7 months. They have had a hard time during these five war years in London and, Indu writes, that they bear obvious mark of it.

584. On 21 November 1944, the Home Member stated that as the members of the Congress Working Committee had been deprived of interviews with their relatives for so long they did not at all want this facility. He had further said that Prafulla Ghose and Acharya Narendra Deva were under the care of a competent Government doctor and they were not allowed to have doctors and medicines of their own choice.

Dec. 9, 1944

Darling Indu,

Two or three days ago we received a parcel of fruit which, we were told, you had sent, apparently through Mridula. This contained grape fruit, मुजम्बी⁵⁸⁵, oranges and apples. They were all good and have been much appreciated. The grape fruit and the oranges, it was stated, were the produce of Anand Bhawan. I was surprised and pleased to find that you were producing such good fruit. I knew that you had many orange trees but I had no idea that they produced मुजम्बी. Most people think that this kind of orange cannot be easily grown in North India.

I have had a kind of joint letter from Amma and Bappi. They write about their visit to Anand Bhawan and how they were charmed by Rajiva, who appeared to them to be the image of you, as you were at that age — Bappi was impressed by your ayah, but for some reason or other she was afraid that the ayah might leave you. Why should she leave Rajiva? Pyare, I understand, wants to add business to his journalistic ventures and for this purpose intends going to America. It is curious how America is drawing people like a magnet.

Puphi must have reached New York. And yet there has been no news thus far of her arrival there. This is surprising.

I asked you to send me some pictures of Rajiva. Send me also a good one of yourself. A new one, for I want to know what you look like now. I must keep pace with your changing self. Pictures do not take one far but they help slightly.

Some months ago *Puphi* wrote to me that the Ramakrishna people in Calcutta had given her a huge pot of Coorg honey for me. I asked her not to send it just then. Well, I do not want it sent at all for it is a difficult business to send honey. But I hope the honey is being used. If you have not got it already try to find out where it is and get hold of it. It will do you good.

What has happened to my yarn that I sent you many months ago? I hope something has been made out of it.

It is pleasant and cool here. This is the best time of the year in Ahmadnagar, as it is in Allahabad.

This is my letter No. 92.

Love

Your loving
Papu

585. Musambi—Sweet lime.

Dec. 16, 1944

Darling Indu,

I have received two letters from you dated 29th Nov. and 3rd December — Nos. 87 and 88. The latter has just come. Somehow they seem to take longer on the journey than they used to. I suppose they have to pass two barriers, two censorships, one in Allahabad and the other in Bombay.

I have received the cigarette-holder you sent me. It is a good one and suits me as I can push some cotton wool in it and this serves as an absorber of the nicotine — So you need not send me another.

As for my clothes I have sent Betty particulars of what I want together with samples — She is having them made.

I am glad our garden is flourishing and looking bright with flowers. Here there has been a marked deterioration chiefly because of my lack of interest in it. What a lot of personal care a garden requires. I have been busy with other work and rather neglected our little garden. I got no fresh seeds and relied on some old ones which failed us at the last moment. Now it is too late to begin as the season is far advanced. Of course there are many odd flowers and plants, some perennials, and they more or less fill the place. When we came here nearly two and a half years ago our yard was just a blank barren area. In the centre of this yard there is a moderate-sized flagstaff supported by four wires. Creepers were trained to go up these wires — the railway creeper which is not attractive but which grows and spreads with amazing rapidity. Soon the whole flagstaff was covered up and for a while it looked remarkably like a miniature Eiffel Tower.

Puphi, I see from the papers, is in New York and is staying at the posh Waldorf Astoria Hotel. It must be very cold there now and she is not too fond of the cold. Hot Springs, where she will go for the Pacific Relations Conference, ought to be warm.

Mehr Taj has finally got married, so I read in some newspaper. It struck me then that some present ought to have been sent to her on my behalf. I am sorry I forgot. Still, it is not too late to send it. Will you please choose something that you consider suitable and that she might like? Something say worth Rs. 150/- or Rs. 200/-. The choice is very limited I suppose. If you cannot get anything else you might get Benares saris. Send them with my love and good wishes.

A couple of days ago I was asked in what way Kishan *chacha* was related to me — This inquiry was made presumably because he had sent

a letter to me and the intricate and difficult question of whether the letter should be delivered to me or not had to be decided by competent authority. Did he come within the prescribed list of near relations who were authorised to write? I do not know and I doubt if anybody else knows exactly. Anyway I have not received the letter and I want you to inform Kishan *chacha* of this. During the past two years two brief letters from Birju *chacha* were delivered to me. He and Kishan *chacha* stand exactly in the same relationship to me—first cousins. And yet it appears that first cousins belong to a doubtful category, though brothers-in-law are allowed to write. It is all very odd and peculiar.

A firm of booksellers in Calcutta—Rupa & Co.—with a branch in Allahabad, have sent me books from time to time. They have been good books as a rule and new English publications. Yesterday I received from them Bernard Shaw's new book—*Everybody's Political What's What*.⁵⁸⁶ I mention this so that you might not send this book.

Do not trouble yourself about Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*—I have plenty of reading material. I have just received two large bundles of foreign periodicals, presumably sent by you.

I have noted what you say about giving the money to Feroze for relief work. He can keep this sum apart for emergencies if he likes.

It is desirable that Feroze should engage himself in some regular work—what this work should be, it is for him to decide. I hope what he has chosen suits him.

I am glad Rajiva is putting on weight and is otherwise well.

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is letter No. 93.

19-12-1944

Darling Betty,

I received your letter of the 2nd Dec.—also the electric shaver and diary for 1945. The shaver is functioning well now. A book has also come presumably sent through you but bearing Rajan's inscriptions—Shaukat

586. This is a volume of Bernard Shaw's thoughts on war, peace, medicine, law, government, science, socialism, capitalism and religion.

Ansari's *Pakistan*.⁵⁸⁷ Could you send me some kind of a wall calendar for 1945. It need not be anything fancy. An advertisement sheet will do which, if necessary, I can cut out and hang up. The sense of time becomes rather feeble in the unchanging environment of prison as there are few distinguishing marks to indicate the passing of days. Hence a calendar is useful.

Some one has sent me Bernard Shaw's new book *Everybody's Political What's What*. I mention this so that you might not send it. It is the kind of book you might feel inclined to send me. Also I might mention that I do not want you to send me Beverley Nichols's book *Verdict on India*⁵⁸⁸ which I find advertised and which some people are trying to boom up. Ever since I read one of Nichols's books long ago, I have had no desire to read another by him. More especially I do not want to waste my time on his latest effort. It surprises me that some people, who ought to know better, are excited about this kind of stuff. I do not suppose you would have sent it anyhow, but I want to make sure. It appears Thacker's of Bombay have brought out an Indian edition of this as well as some other recent English books. How badly they do their job. You sent me one of the books published by them—*For Whom the Bell Tolls*—and it was full of mistakes and bad type and printing, and at the same time priced very high. Evidently they are out to make money easily. Some time back I got Gunther's *D-Day*⁵⁸⁹—English edition—then I noticed in a paper that Thacker's have brought out an Indian edition full of mistakes. Why do they indulge in this kind of sloppy work? No decent publisher would tolerate such shoddy work.

It is difficult for me to judge of book prices in India now but I have an impression that they are much too high compared to English and even American prices. Even your book seems to me to be highly priced. This kind of thing limits circulation.

Narendra Deva has received news that his younger brother⁵⁹⁰ is on the verge of death. He had been ill for some time. Probably he is

587. Shaukat Ansari, general secretary of the All India Nationalist Muslims Conference. His book, *Pakistan*, argued that Muslim interests could be protected not through partition of authority and resources but by educational, social and economic progress.

588. In this book, Beverley Nichols denounces Mahatma Gandhi as a "deceiver", the Congress as a "Brahmin" organisation and Hinduism as "debased and discreditable". Jinnah seemed to him the only Indian with a constructive outlook.

589. *D-Day* (1944) by John Gunther is a personal record of his eleven weeks' tour of North Africa and the Near East at the time of war.

590. Dr. Yogendra Deva.

dead by this time. This has been a great shock for him and he is considerably upset.

I suppose the children will be coming home for Christmas, looking bright and cheerful, and your flat will be full of their cries and movements. Give my love to them. Are you going away anywhere for the holidays? I seem to remember your mentioning that you intended going South.

The New Year will soon be with us. All my love and good wishes to you and Raja.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

Dec. 23, 1944

Darling Indu,

Yesterday I read in the papers that when Sarojini was passing through Allahabad you went with Rajiva to the station to meet her. Rajiva was described as eight months old. This was of course just double his age, but I wondered if he was big enough looking to delude people. I suppose he is growing fast. For another three months or a little more, Allahabad will be just right for him, but then the warmer weather will not be so suitable. I am not a great believer in children being protected too much from our normal climate. They should get used to it or else they become misfits and physically somewhat unstable. But still I think that it will be better for him to spend his first hot weather in a better & cooler climate. I wonder if you have thought of it. The average hill station is always a nuisance and expensive, but since the war began, it has become even more unattractive and difficult of access. I think it would be good for both Rajiva and you if you took him to Khali. Except for the fact that it is somewhat out of the way and not easy to reach, everything is in its favour. The climate is delightful and the pine-clad hills are full of health. Personally, from a psychological point of view also, I fancy the mountain air and atmosphere for a growing child. It broadens his vision and gives him new perspectives. Khali will also require very little in the way of special arrangement for you. Only the journey will be a little trying. From the point of view of Khali also it will be good for someone to live there for a while. It is far too much neglected.

If you go to Khali, it would be desirable to ask Sheila and her children to join you there. Their kids may also find their first hot weather a little trying and the change from London in wartime to the open air of the Indian mountains will be very good for them.

It seems a bit odd for me to think and write about the summer when we are still in the early stages of our winter season. All manner of fresh developments may take place in this little world of ours during these coming months and it is not always wise to make plans too far ahead. Yet it is better to accept things as they are and plan for them, rather than to wait for something to happen. Plans can always be changed to fit in with changing circumstances. Very little planning indeed is necessary. All you have to do is to inform the Khali people well in advance so that they can keep the house clean and ready. This will anyway keep them up to the mark. I do not know who is running Khali now. *Puphi* wrote to me that she had asked Krishnaji⁵⁹¹ of Lucknow to look after it in some way or other. Probably this had more to do with the garden produce and the cottage industries that are or were carried on there. You can write to Krishnaji and tell him of your intention to visit Khali in the summer. Upadhyaya should also write to Chandra Singh at Khali—I hope I have got the name right. If you go to Khali you should take Upadhyaya with you. He will be useful there and knows the people in Almora. Also it will do him good.

Sheila has had a hard time during the past five and a half years. I should like her to have some rest and a holiday. She and her children should of course be wholly our guests at Khali and no burden of expense should fall on her. Do not mind the expense of your or her going there. You should draw on my account for it. I suppose about mid-April will be the right time to go there. It is still spring there then and very delightful. On your way to Khali you could break journey at Bareilly for a little rest. Anyway you have to change at Bareilly. Our friends, the Dwarka Prasad family, will be happy to have you in Bareilly. Where Dwarka Prasad is now I do not know—in prison or out. But he has a huge family.

I wrote to you about the letter Kishan *chacha* wrote to me. After the necessary inquiries and proper investigation it was decided that I was not entitled to receive his letter. So I have not seen it and do not know what it contained. He should be informed of this.

How is Madan Bhai getting on? Have you any fresh news of him?

Betty writes to me that she intends going to Allahabad at the end of January and to spend a month there. I am glad.

591. Krishna Narayan, a businessman of Lucknow.

You should get this letter on the eve of the New Year. So again all my love and good wishes to you and Rajiva.

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 94.

Dec. 30, 1944

Darling Indu,

This is my last letter to you written in 1944. What a year it has been all over the world and in India, and what a contrast between the wars and tumults outside and our quiet unchanging life here. Every new year brings the promise of youth and yet it ages soon and the bloom fades off. So we shall enter 1945, inevitably affected by some psychological process of change and with our minds stretching out into the future. How one clings to the future in spite of repeated experience that this future is often enough just a continuation of the stale past.

After a long interval I have returned to you some books. These are:

- 1 R. Mehta's *Pre-Buddhist India*
- 2 Munshi's *The Glory that was Gurjardesh* Parts I and III
- 3 Dr. Sarma: *The Renaissance of Hinduism*
- 4 *Reshaping Man's Heritage*
- 5 *Prayers, Praises & Psalms*
- 6 Masani's *Socialism Reconsidered*

There are many other books that I have to return. I must get rid of my accumulations. I shall send them to you in small batches next month by post.

Some newspapers have come out with a story of the many books I have been reading recently. You must have seen the long list given. As a matter of fact out of that long and varied list I have only received three books, the others you could not obtain for me. The list represents many of the books I have asked for during the last year or more, not the books I received. I wonder how the newspapermen got hold of these titles. Probably Betty keeps a list and someone saw this and made a foolish and incorrect use of it. But it is a trivial matter and does not make any difference.

As you keep a list of books wanted, you might add to it Aldous Huxley's new novel: *Time Must Have a Stop*.⁵⁹² Huxley is one of the authors one does not like to miss. I suppose it will be some time before this book appears in India.

Betty has sent me a number of shirts and shorts made according to samples sent by me. She sent them in a small suitcase and I propose to return this to her. I shall send in it some of my old *kurtas* and pyjamas which I do not require. Later, when Betty goes to Allahabad, she can take them along with her. It is difficult to send railway parcels direct to Allahabad.

I have received several bundles of foreign periodicals recently. I suppose they all go to Anand Bhawan first and are then forwarded by you via the Bombay Secretariat.

I have had no letter from you for two weeks. I hope all is well with you and Rajiva.

Love to you and Feroze and the little one.

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 95.

December 31. Sunday

I have been very busy revising for a second time my MSS. of *The Discovery of India*. Having finished reading it out to Maulana I was anxious to have done with this and so I stopped all other work. During the last nine days I stopped my Persian lessons also—took Christmas holidays! I have just succeeded in finishing the job. Maulana's & Asaf's suggestions would not have taken so much time., Most of the changes made were due to fresh ideas. I am thoroughly tired of the job. I was anxious to finish it this year and not to carry it on to the next year. Well, I have just managed it and am putting away the MSS.—not to open it or look at it again, I hope, till I go out and get it typed. Of that no present indication.

X

X

X

X

592. A novel in which Aldous Huxley presents his own plan for world betterment. "World reform must begin in the individual soul and men may enter the Divine Ground of eternity only by a regime of selflessness and contemplation."

My cold has not wholly left me—it clings on slightly—Meanwhile, I have developed a pain in my left shoulder & back—rheumatic, neuralgic or some kind of neuritis. I do not know what it is; but it is a great nuisance. I have had it now for about a week. What worries me even more than this pain is the frequent occurrence of petty troubles and pain. During the last few months I have had some pain or trouble with my calf, my forearm, my hand—also my eyes and teeth need attending to—Age, age, advancing steadily and weakening the whole system, in spite of all my exercises and other efforts!

x x x x

Yesterday Bhulabhai Desai & B. G. Kher came here to interview Vallabhbhai on some legal matter. No one else amongst us met them. This was the first breach from outside into our yard during the last 29 months.

x x x x

Prafulla Ghose is still bed-ridden & badly shaken up. The letters he writes to his sister.⁵⁹³ (and which appear in the papers), are extraordinarily pessimistic and read badly. I fear he has little stamina for bearing physical pain or facing illness. Maulana has written to the Viceroy about his illness and yet surprisingly nothing has so far come out of it.

x x x x

I have recently learnt with surprise and some dismay that Kripalani writes very detailed letters to Sucheta regularly giving an account of the most trivial matters relating to us. Indeed he has written much that he should never have written. He lacks all sense of proportion and responsibility. Every letter of his is of course read by three or four batches of censors. It is not surprising that the A.I.C.C. office went to pieces under him.

x x x x

No letter from Indu for over two weeks.

2.1.45

Darling Betty,

...I am delighted to learn of Harsha's and Ajit's progress in school. It is a little surprising to learn that Harsha has done better at sports than Ajit. I should have thought it would be the other way. This shows

593. Jamuna Ghose.

how a proper school develops children and brings out their inherent capacities which otherwise may not have sufficient scope. You will appreciate now how wise Raja and you were in sending the boys to school in Gwalior.

Yes, the New Year has begun and this is the first letter I am writing in 1945. It is well to look hopefully to the future and send one's good wishes. And yet it is also desirable not to hope too much or expect more than is likely to happen. It is easier thus to avoid disappointment.

My love and good wishes to you and Raja and the children.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

Jan. 5. 1945

Darling Indu,

Today, probably for the first time since we came here, the temperature registered a sudden fall and reached 38 or possibly lower. Having got rather used to long spells of warm and equable weather this change has a sting in it, or may be my bones are getting older. My hands are quite cold. I am almost regretting having sent back some *kurtas* and pyjamas, though I have enough to carry on with and the cold will not last many days.

I received two letters from you on the 31st Dec.—dated 14/12 and 20/12. Why there should have been this delay in my getting the earlier letter I do not understand, especially as it bears a pencil endorsement—probably made in the Bombay Secretariat—that it was received there on 28/12. It seems to have taken 2 weeks to go from Allahabad to Bombay.

Rajiva's pictures are good. He looks quite human. He is attractive and has got a good humour-look. In some of them he resembles you, in one there is a marked resemblance to Feroze. Don't forget to send me a good picture of yourself. The idea of your getting fat amuses me. It will take a long time before your tummy becomes visible.

After all you have written in praise of Rajiva's ayah, I do not think you are wise in risking losing her for an additional 5/- a month. I do not know what you pay her but in any event the comfort and convenience of having a first-rate ayah cannot be measured in terms of an extra five rupees. After all you are not making a permanent endowment. A few extra months or a year at the higher rate will not make much difference so far as money is concerned.

From Betty's letter I learnt that Vidya was getting married soon in Lucknow. Probably it was about this that Kishan *chacha* wrote to me. I am glad Betty is going to attend her wedding and hope that you can manage to do so also. These courtesies count and are appreciated. Both Kishan *chacha* and Shona *chachi* are sensitive about them and Vidya of course should be made to feel that she has all our good wishes. I have asked Betty to take a present for Vidya on my behalf. Please convey to Vidya my love and good wishes.

I am interested to learn that Yunus has got engaged. I suppose he is still in prison — I do not remember the girl — The marriage will no doubt create a rumpus at both ends. What kind of ceremony are they going to have? — a civil marriage? News of yet another mixed marriage, as they are called, comes from Betty. It appears that Raja's brother, Surottambhai, has got engaged to Beryl Shamshere Singh, Amrit Kaur's niece. I do not think I have met Beryl. I am told she is a very nice girl.

I have received the cigarette-holder you sent. It is just right. Do not trouble to send the honey. Eat it up yourself. Honey has gone up in people's estimation, I suppose, ever since sugar was rationed. Is your sugar rationed in Allahabad? We have been getting here an ounce a day per person (or to be accurate 16 oz. for half a month of 15 or 16 days). This does not go very far with some people. For me it is ample as I use it with tea & coffee only — and a pinch in my dal. Is this habit of putting a little sugar in dal a Kashmiri habit or just a Nehru vagary? Other people are amused at it. I take *gur* with my *dalia*. *Gur* is quite good provided it is clean, but then it is not clean and the thought of the many hands through which it has passed rather puts me off. What we usually do here is to heat it and stain it off. This process removes much of the undesirable matter in it.

Peshawar *chappals* are always welcome, especially as one cannot get the right kind anywhere else. But I do not require them here. I brought two with me here. One pair was worn out and discarded. The other is carefully preserved in a practically new condition. I managed to get something like it here and have been using it instead. As a matter of fact all my walking and running is done in canvas shoes and so the *chappals* are used more or less as bedroom slippers. The mortality in canvas shoes has been heavy; I think I must have used about 20 pairs since I came here. They seem to be made of some ersatz stuff which does not last at all. Most of them come from Batas. They ought to be ashamed of the stuff they supply. If Yunus has got a pair of *chappals* made for me, they might be sent to you and you can keep them for me.

I have returned some clothes (5 *kurtas*, 6 pyjamas, 1 dhoti, 1 black *malida* waistcoat, 1 pair stockings, 1 doz. handkerchiefs) to Betty. Also some books : *Gandhiji—Commemoration Volume*; 2 volumes of cyclostyled correspondence between Gandhiji & Govt. &c.; 3 volumes of National Planning Committee's reports. All these I should like to keep for reference.

I have received a letter (No. D.O.G./9549 of Allahabad Dec. 9, 1944) from W.G.P. Wall, Director of Public Instructions, U.P. together with a copy of a scheme he has drawn up, 'Kamala Nehru Scholarship Endowment Trust Fund.' I do not know if this came through you or direct. Anyway I do not propose to write to him directly as this might involve special requests to Govt. Will you, therefore, please write to him and give him my message? Tell him that I have received his letter and scheme and I am grateful to him for all the trouble he has taken in this matter. As for the scheme, he is in the best position to judge and to fit it in with Govt. rules and regulations. So he can go ahead and do what he thinks best. There is, however, one basic suggestion which I am making for his consideration, but it should be understood that this is just a suggestion. He can decide as he thinks best under the circumstances. The suggestion is this: It seems to me that it might be better to use the income as it comes in rather than to accumulate it and only use the interest. This will yield a much larger sum for use immediately. From his letter it appears that a sum of Rs. 3904/14/- has so far been collected in the course of the last 4 or 5 years. That means an annual income of between Rs. 780 and Rs. 975—say Rs. 800/-. Whether this is likely to be a regular income or not I do not know. Even if we put it at Rs. 600 per annum, this means Rs. 50 per month. If it is possible to use this sum immediately it could be divided up into scholarships of Rs. 10/- each. Rs. 5/- a month seems rather a small sum to give. If most of the income is being used up as it comes in, then of course there is no chance for a permanent fund to grow up. But immediate results are obtained. As I have said above, he can decide as he thinks best.

Chandrashankar Shukla⁵⁹⁴ can publish my old article in reply to Soumyendranath Tagore.⁵⁹⁵

594. (b. 1901); Mahatma Gandhi's Secretary, 1933-34; editor of the Gujarati edition of *Harijan*, 1933-40; his works include 40 books in Gujarati.

595. Chandrashankar Shukla brought out a book of tributes to Mahatma Gandhi entitled *Gandhiji—As we Know him*. He printed in it an article of Jawaharlal, published in 1936, written in reply to attacks on Mahatma Gandhi which Soumyendranath Tagore had published in France. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 7, pp. 75-78.

The National Publishing Co. of Madras can also reproduce the birthday letter.⁵⁹⁶ This is really the first one in *Glimpses* and normally the publishers have to be consulted. But in present conditions this might be dispensed with. It will be desirable however for some token payment to be made. I suggested that they pay Rs. 25/- to the Kamala Nehru Memorial Hospital.

I think you had better send me *Anna Karenina* in English. Betty has not sent this book in French to me. Anyway there are others who would like to read it in English. There is another book that I would like you send — W. Macneill Dixon's *The Human Situation*. This was with me here a year and a half ago — I sent it to you to Panchgani in July 1943. I find now that Maulana would like to see it. If you can trace it easily, have it sent. Otherwise do not bother.

Could you ask Feroze or someone else to find out from the Professor of Physics, Allahabad University, some names of, more or less, recent books on modern developments in physics, especially the Theory of Relativity and the Quantum Theory. If he can supply the books all the better — They will be returned to him. There is another way also of finding out about these books. You can ask Betty — she will probably be in Allahabad soon — to write to Homi Bhabha⁵⁹⁷ at the Bangalore institute of science to get the information.

I am glad you have become joint secretary of the local hospital committee.

I am not surprised to learn that Sheila's children are not keeping well. That is an additional reason why they should have a spell of Khali with you in the summer.

I am enclosing the dividend warrant signed — Send it to the Punjab National Bank for my account.

This is my letter No. 96.

Love

Your loving
Papu

596. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 4, pp. 417-420.

597. Homi Jehangir Bhabha (1909-1966); atomic physicist; Fellow of the Royal Society; Secretary, Department of Atomic Energy; President, International Conference on Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy, Geneva, 1955; died in an air accident in Switzerland in January 1966.

January 12 — Friday

The New Year has brought irritation to me — or rather a continuation of the past year's irritation. The pain in my left shoulder continued, sometimes became worse, and extended to the left arm. Nothing very much but just annoying and coming in the way of work and sleep. The nights were bad and I developed a technique of sitting up in bed and reading in the middle of the night. What annoyed me especially was not the pain itself which could be easily borne, but the fact of such a pain. Were all my exercises and efforts to keep fit and in good health just waste of time? Was age tightening its grip on me?

However, the pain is very much less now and does not interfere much with my sleep or most other activities. I sit bare-bodied in the sun. For two or three days it grew cold & the temperature fell to 37° or 38° F.

x

x

x

x

For some time past there has been, amongst some of us, some kind of anticipation & expectation of developments on or before January 14. On that date the last six-monthly notice served on us by Govt. expires. Why anything unusual should happen then I failed to see but Vallabh-bhai was confident of something happening — probably a transfer. Of course we have long been expecting a transfer or release of Prafulla Ghose because of his illness. But why should others be affected?

Today brought new notices for all of us except Prafulla Babu. Presumably he is going to be released in a day or two. For the rest we carry on. I would much rather not have a transfer—We are running our thirtieth month — a long period in retrospect. On January 26th — Independence Day — we complete and celebrate 900 days here.

Jan. 12/13, 1945

Darling Indu,

I have your letter written on New Year's Day — No. 91.

I am glad you like the idea of going to Khali. Of course your plans and movements will largely be governed now and for some years to come by that young tyrant Rajiva. It was thought of him chiefly that led me to suggest Khali. I should like him to become acquainted as

early as possible with the Himalayas, have sight of the snow-covered peaks, look down into the deep valleys, and breathe the fragrant and health-giving air of the pine-clad hillsides. The more I think of it, the more I like the idea. Your fear that Khali is perhaps too out of the way and isolated is not really justified. We have got into the habit of thinking of places at some distance from a railway station as out of the way. Khali is for all practical purposes a suburb of Almora and can be reached from there within an hour or less. The motor road now almost touches the Khali estate. You can reach Khali from Allahabad within 36 hours, though it is preferable to proceed in a more leisurely fashion. As for medical facilities, Almora is as well provided as any average Indian city — apart from the big cities like Calcutta, Bombay &c. There is a hospital there, a civil surgeon, an assistant civil surgeon and a number of private practitioners. The doctor I would recommend is Dr. Khazan Chand⁵⁹⁸ who is fairly competent and who would no doubt go out of his way to be of service to you. He has a car and can easily run up to Khali whenever wanted or at regular intervals. He is not a children's specialist of course but as a general practitioner he is as good as any in Allahabad.

In these days of rationing you will probably be better off in Khali than in most other places. There will be an abundance of fruit, vegetables, eggs, good milk, and most other necessities can be obtained in Almora.

The journey to Khali seems troublesome and a little alarming but it is not really so. Indeed it is probably easier and more comfortable now than a long railway journey to the South. Both from the health point of view and that of accessibility, Ooty is not a patch on Khali. In a sense you would be more cut off there than in Khali, certainly further removed from Allahabad. It will also be much more expensive.

The normal method of going to Almora is to go by motor bus or private car. Motor buses run regularly but obviously they are not indicated for Rajiva or you — I do not think there will be the least difficulty in getting a private car. Indeed Pantji says that a letter from him from here can fix this up, though this is not necessary.

I would, however, suggest to you not to go by the motor road but to take to the bridle path instead. This suggestion, no doubt, surprises you for all of us are so used to travelling and even thinking in terms of the automobile. I am all for the automobile as a rule but its virtues are not so overwhelming in the mountains. The last time I went to Almora I decided that on the next occasion I would travel in a more

598. (1897-1977); Chairman of Almorá Municipal Board, 1938-45.

leisurely way by the bridle path, either on foot or on horseback. Old memories came back to me and I remembered faintly how I had enjoyed that journey long ago, before the automobile had descended on these mountain roads. I was only 8 or 9 then, and at that age one can enjoy almost everything new. The whole family trekked — and it was a large family — and there used to be a long procession of ponies, dandies, luggage porters &c. That was *Dadu's* way of doing things. From Almora we had gone to the Pindari glacier — again that tremendous procession, with additions for we had to carry some tents also and food for the journey. When the family returned to Allahabad at the end of the summer they left me behind in charge of the headmaster of the local high school — a man named Thomas. I lived with his family for many months.

My next visit to Almora took place a long long time afterwards — It was in 1934 when I was taken to the Almora Jail! During the intervening years I had often been to Naini Tal and even beyond but I never managed to reach Almora. Once I almost got there. I was on my way to it when I got a telegram at Ranikhet that Mummy was very ill and I hurried back. This was I think in 1929 when Mummy and you were at Mussoorie.

But I had occasion to travel by the bridle path from Kathgodam to Ramgarh (on the way to Almora) in 1921 to see *Dadu* who was resting there.

The distance from Kathgodam to Almora by motor road is over 80 miles. By bridle path it is 38 miles with three resting places on the way — Bhim Tal, Ramgarh and Piura — where there are good dak bungalows or rest houses. Each stage is about 10 miles or less and it is pleasant going, shady as a rule, with ups and downs. Starting after a good breakfast one can easily reach the next stage by lunch time and spend the rest of the day there. Or, one can carry lunch and have it *en route* whenever one feels like it. The dak bungalows have cooks.

Some people, unused to this kind of travelling, may be a little frightened at the prospect. As a matter of fact it is very easy going and comfortable — probably far more so than the tedious and crowded railway journeys nowadays. One need not of course travel in the sumptuous and complicated way which *Dadu* favoured. Besides there are many facilities now which were unobtainable in the old days. For instance, all the heavy luggage can be sent on by lorry from Kathgodam to Almora. Only beddings, some clothes and warm things & a few other necessities need be taken with one. Each stage of the journey is an easy walk but naturally for you and Rajiva and the ayah dandies

would be necessary. If I had to go that way I would walk, keeping a pony for emergencies.

It is usually possible to arrange for dandies and ponies at almost a moment's notice at Kathgodam. But it is safer to fix them up a day or two ahead. It is quite easy to do so by writing or by sending someone (say Upadhyaya) a day before. A line to Pantji's family in Naini Tal (Chandra Dat) would facilitate matters.

This kind of journeying appeals to me but it is quite possible that it may not appeal to others who have less of the savage in them than I have. It depends really on a mental approach — even, you might say, a philosophy of life. Most of our journeys nowadays are looked upon as troublesome but inevitable affairs leading to the desired goal. So we put up with all manner of inconveniences on the way and arrive exhausted at journey's end. The goal and the journey's end are there of course but why not make the journey itself a part of the goal, giving health and pleasure, even apart from the more distant goal? The holiday, if one can call it that, should begin the moment we set off and not when we arrive at the other end. Life becomes fuller this way, the process of living consciously and actively is a continuous one and not a thing of fits and starts. There is also a sense of freedom about it, a lessening of dependence on others, apart from the communion with nature that it gives. All this trouble about petrol rationing vanishes. For Rajiva, who will be about 8 months old by that time and able to sit up and take an intelligent interest in his surroundings, it should be a stimulating experience. He will have to go in a dandy, which is unfortunate. A year or two later he could have done a little walking or riding. I remember carrying about Betty in the front of my saddle in Naini Tal when she was about 10 months old.

Thus the journey from Kathgodam to Khali becomes a delightful excursion with the minimum of worry. From Almora it would be desirable to go by car to Khali. It is only 6 or 7 miles.

In Almora of course there are hosts of people who will be eager to help you in every way. Upadhyaya knows a lot of them. Probably the most useful person is Rudra Dat Bhat,⁵⁹⁹ a merchant. Then there is Badri Dat Pande. And of course Gertrude⁶⁰⁰ and Boshi Sen.⁶⁰¹ The best time to go up is the middle of April. It will not be

599. (1890-1969); a leading Congressman of Almora.

600. Gertrude Emerson Sen, one of the founder editors of *Asia* in 1917; later its advisory editor from India for 25 years; wife of Basiwar Sen and director of Uday Shankar's Indian Cultural Centre at Almora; author of *Voiceless India*.

601. Basiwar Sen (b. 1887); botanist; well-known for his research in cellular structure of plants; founder director, Vivekananda Laboratory, Almora.

cold then and travelling by bridle path will be pleasant. Later it may become rather warm.

Of course if you prefer going by car, a private one can easily be fixed up. An advantage of Khali over Ooty will be that Feroze will be able to pay you frequent visits.

It is possible that Madan Bhai may be out and available by the time you go up. You should invite him to join you there. His health must be pretty well shattered up and rest at Khali will be good for him.

Have you heard about the Brewsters⁶⁰² again? Thinking of Almora, they came to my mind. I have had no news of them for many years.

From the American papers I find that the Ramkrishna Centre of New York has issued a new translation of the Gita by Swami Nikhilananda.⁶⁰³ This is very highly spoken of. I wonder if it is possible to obtain this from our friends at Belur Math. They ought to have it. You might write and inquire.

I am sending you back some books :

- 1 Gandhi : *Nonviolence in Peace & War*
- 2 Smith : *Modern Islam in India*
- 3 Gunther : *D-Day*
- 4 Thompson : *Burmese Silver*
- 5 Sampurnanand : *The Individual & the State*
- 6 De Silva : *The Four Essential Doctrines of Buddhism*
- 7 Ajwani : *Introducing India*

Yesterday we received a parcel of guavas which I suppose you had sent. They are excellent and maintain worthily the reputation of Allahabad. Also I received with them a bottle of guava jelly and a tin of guava cheese.

I have received a letter (dated 2/1/45) from the manager of the Allahabad Law Journal Press informing me that the period of the sole agency for the sale of *Letters from a Father to his Daughter*, which was given to the Oxford University Press, expired on 31.12.1944, and the Oxford Univ. Press want the agency renewed till 31.3.1949. Will you please tell the A.L.J. people that before I can send a proper reply or make any suggestions for the future I must have full particulars and information. I have no idea of what the terms of agency were or are. These were fixed up by Kitabistan without any previous reference to me and I was only informed of them later and then only, so far as I remember, partially. It is odd that a reference has now been made to

602. Earl H. Brewster and his wife Achsah Barlow; American artists who visited India twice and lived in Almora for some time.

603. Head of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre in New York and co-translator of many Sanskrit classics.

me only after the expiry of the period of agency. This should have been done well in advance of it to enable me to consider the matter. Situated as I am, delay in consultation is inevitable. I do not, however, wish that existing arrangements should be upset suddenly because of this delay. The Oxford Univ. Press should be informed that I am waiting for some relevant information before coming to a decision; as soon as I receive this I shall communicate with the A.L.J. Press about future arrangements. Meanwhile, to avoid any confusion or gap period, I am agreeable to the Oxford Univ. Press continuing the old agency on the old terms for another year, that is to the end of December 1945.

The A.L.J. Press to be requested to supply me with the following particulars:

- 1 Copy of agreement with Oxford Univ. Press.
- 2 Statement about royalties received by them on my behalf during the past three years. What part of them have been paid over to me or to someone on my behalf?—and to whom? Any balances standing to my credit to be sent to Bachhraj & Co. Ltd., Bombay.
- 3 Are the A.L.J. Press functioning both as printers & publishers of the book? Have Kitabistan any further interest in it?
- 4 Is the book being issued in one uniform edition or in different formats—for students & the general public? What is the sale price of the book for both these categories of people?
- 5 Is the book sold solely through the Oxford Univ. Press? Do the A.L.J. Press not sell it directly to any booksellers?
- 6 What institutions, so far as is known, have adopted it as a textbook? I understand that the Calcutta Univ. adopted it for the matriculation exam. Has any other university or education dept. also done so—I am referring of course only to the English edition.
- 7 Is there any continuing general sale of the book, apart from the sale as a prescribed textbook, and is this general sale specially catered for?
- 8 Any other relevant information might be added.

Further the A.L.J. Press might be asked if they have now any dealings with any of the translations of the book—apart from the Hindi & Urdu ones which they print for the U.P. Education Department. Do they issue any Hindi or Urdu edition for general public sale (apart from students)?

This is my letter No. 97—I am getting on to the century!

Love

Your loving
Papu

Later.

I have just got your letter of Jan. 7th in which you mention the guavas &c., Jinarajadasa⁶⁰⁴ & the cold. The guavas I have received, not the two books so far. I have not met Jinarajadasa but I have known of him ever since the days when I joined the Theosophical Society at the age of 12 or 13. He should really have been the President of the Theosophical Society after Mrs. Besant if Arundale⁶⁰⁵ had not cut him out.

As for the cold we all seem to have felt that way. The news Pantji has received from Naini Tal is quite exciting — houses snowed up &c.

I have also got today a letter from *Puphi* from New York sent soon after her arrival there. She complains of the cold also and at the same time of the over-heated rooms. But her biggest grouse is the expensiveness of everything. She has not fallen in love with New York and dislikes its skyscrapers.

P

January 20th — Saturday

We are ten here now for Prafulla Ghosh has gone. On the 13th evening Sendak informed Prafulla Babu that he had received instructions to release him first thing on the 15th Jan. It was rather odd but that very night 13th–14th — Prafulla had a relapse and Sendak had to be sent for from his bungalow soon after midnight. He recovered slightly the next day but was still feeble on the 15th. He left that day at 3 p.m. accompanied by the Jailer who went with him to Bombay. Prafulla was released just 100 days after Mahmud.

X

X

X

X

Prafulla was anxious to give vivid details of our physical conditions to the public. Both Maulana & I tried hard to dissuade him from giving any ornate accounts. We succeeded, I think, to some extent. Still he had had some say and I have been described as aging rapidly — true, I suppose, though it is not pleasant to contemplate. The person who really requires competent treatment is Pantji, who has been

604. C. Jinarajadasa (1875-1953); President of the Theosophical Society, 1946-52; author of over 40 books.

605. G. S. Arundale (d. 1945); President of the Theosophical Society, 1934-45.

on the downgrade almost since we came here. His is a hospital case — an operation &c.— but he does not like the idea of being sent to the military hospital here and deliberately minimizes his ailments, which are many and serious. So far as Sendak is concerned he has left him to his own resources more or less. Pantji has a regular battery of medicines in his room and is constantly dosing himself. At night he has some of them, including sleeping pills, next to him. He can walk only with care because of his hernia. His spine pains him — His teeth give him continuous trouble.

x x x x

The pain in my back has almost disappeared, but just a bit of it hangs on in my left arm. I am gradually reverting to my normal routine.

x x x x

The cold spell here was brief and it is already warming up. But in the North it was something unique — the hill stations all snow-bound, houses blocked up with snow — houses collapsed &c. Even Dehra Dun had a good fall of snow.

Surprisingly *Vasanta Panchami* was early this year — day before yesterday on Jan. 18th. Vidya's marriage was to have taken place at Lucknow on *Vasanta Panchami*.

x x x x

Feel rather dull and low in spirits.

Jan. 20, 1945

Indu darling,

Accounts in the newspapers of the snow and cold in the North have exhilarated and excited me. Mussoorie and Simla and Naini Tal all snow-bound — people having to dig their way out of their houses — the roof of Hakman's Hotel collapsing from the weight of the snow — even Dehra Dun becoming all white with snow. Khali must have become one mass of snow and the house must have been half buried in it. I remember how I enjoyed a light snowfall in Almora in 1934-35 and

hoped for more. In Dehra Dun I could only look wistfully at the snow on the neighbouring hills and hope that a favourable wind might bring some snow to my little yard also. Well, I suppose, this brief spell is past and is already a memory. Here after a few days of cold weather, there was a rather sudden and marked change and now it is definitely warmish. I was surprised to discover that *Vasanta Panchami* had arrived — Usually it comes off early in February. I remembered Vidya's marriage and connected it with this day — a favourite one for weddings. I hope the wedding went off well and Vidya is happy about it.

We are ten now for Dr. Prafulla Ghosh has left us, exactly 100 days after Mahmud went. A century of days has become a useful unit for us to note the passing of time. Months are over too soon and a year passes slowly. That reminds me that in another 6 days — on the 26th January — we shall complete 900 days here.

Dr. Ghosh has, I read from the papers, said something about our respective physical conditions and has pointed out that I am getting older. True, none of us grows younger with the passing of time and all our efforts to delude ourselves or others are childish and vain. But I think Prafulla Babu has rather exaggerated, so far as I am concerned. A person's activities or the lack of them depend so much on the passing mood, which indeed is affected by the physical condition, but depends also on many other factors. Generally speaking, I keep very well and I propose to continue doing so. It is difficult to take an objective view of oneself, though I try to do so. Compared to my companions here I am a shining example of good health. Prafulla Babu has mentioned Pantji also. That is more to the point and I have long been concerned about him. These two years and a half have pulled him down in a variety of ways and he is continually suffering from a number of ailments. Being made that way, he tries to make light of them and would like others to ignore them or at any rate not to worry about them. But that is not good enough and I worry about him.

I have sent you the following books :

- 1 *China Handbook 1943*
- 2 *Global War*
- 3 *Recent Judgements in India*
- 4 *Pantopia*
- 5 *Tendulkar : 30 Months in Russia*
- 6 *Grain-Standard Labour Money*
- 7 *Radhakrishnan : Education, Politics & War*
- 8 *Shah : Principles of Planning*
- 9 *Ethics of Buddhism*
- 10 *Beautiful Valleys of Kashmir*

I have just received the two books which Jinarajadasa gave you: Citrine's *In Russia Now*⁶⁰⁶ and George Sava's *Russia Triumphant*. Am I to return these to you when I have finished with them? Or is there a way of my returning them direct to him?

More than a year ago Betty wrote to me that Mrs. Robeson had sent her a letter in which she had mentioned sending me books from time to time. I told Betty that I had received none — Now Chand mentions this again in a letter to me — This is odd for I do not remember ever having received a book from Essie Robeson. When I was in Dehra in 1941 I received packets of newspaper cuttings from her. Indeed I wrote and asked her then for a number of books. I suppose the books she sent were lost in transit or were suppressed by the censors. You have not, by any chance, received any book sent by her?

Betty must be with you — I wonder how she liked the cold. A long stay in Bombay is not a suitable preparation for facing real cold weather. How she and Raja used to shiver in Dehra Dun! Give my love to her, and to Rajiva and Feroze.

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 98.

January 22 — Monday

We have all been rather upset by a speech⁶⁰⁷ delivered by Sarojini at a press conference in Madras. An excessively foolish speech. Also by Bhulabhai's repeated visits to the Viceroy.⁶⁰⁸ Apparently he is hatching some scheme — some proposal for a settlement. Anything coming from Bhulabhai — anything of this type — is suspect —

606. It is a report on conditions in Russia as observed by Sir Walter Citrine, who led the British Trade Union delegation to Moscow in October 1941.

607. On 18 January 1945, Sarojini Naidu described Jinnah as the one incorruptible person in the whole of India. "I may not agree with him; but if there is one who cannot be bought by title, honour or position, it is Mr. Mahomed Ali Jinnah."

608. Bhulabhai Desai, after consulting Mahatma Gandhi and Liaquat Ali Khan, was attempting to arrange a basis on which a coalition government could be formed at the centre. Known as the Desai-Liaquat formula, it envisaged an interim national government in which the Hindus and Muslims would have 40 per cent representation each, and the scheduled castes and other groups 20 per cent representation.

January 27. Saturday

Another Independence Day yesterday — our third here — We observed it as during previous years by meeting in the afternoon at 3 and silently repeating the pledge. Maulana said a few words, so did Vallabhbhai. I was asked by Maulana to say something also but I did not take advantage of his invitation. I had nothing to say.

To read in the papers of all the orders, obstructions & arrangements of Govt., to prevent any celebration of the day is most irritating. Surely if I was out I would not put up with this kind of continuing insult. I would soon get into trouble. And yet how nervous Govt. is after all its repression & oppression.

x x x x

For some days I have been taking sunbaths and as I expected they have done me good. I feel fitter and in better mood. The pain in the back and the left arm has gone — only a slight dull feeling thus occasionally remains. I am continuing massage.

x x x x

Two years ago, and even a year ago, Asaf Ali was in a bad way — physically rather broken up with various ailments and mentally even more so. He has pulled himself up and has been very much better during the past few months. He keeps better health and has been writing rather good Urdu verse. He is a pleasant companion with wider interests than many of us.

x x x x

Pantji has at last agreed to ask for an operation for his hernia. This has been growing worse and he is practically bed-ridden. Apart from this he has numerous other troubles — spine, teeth, insomnia &c. And yet he has patiently borne all these without complaining or even saying much to Sendak. He keeps a cupboard full of medicines and doses himself. It has been obvious that he was deteriorating physically rather fast but his idea of self-respect & dignity kept him from taking any step. 'Carrying on' somehow till better times has been his motto.

At last there was a joint attack on him by Maulana, Vallabhbhai, Narendra Deva and me and we all pressed upon him to demand proper treatment and operation. Reluctantly he agreed and spoke to Sendak. A surgeon was called in for consultation and he said, as he was bound to, that an operation was indicated. Further that in view of Pantji's

general condition and his large size, the operation might be rather serious. And so I suppose some kind of a report has been sent to Govt. Such an operation cannot possibly take place here. It must be done in a good hospital in Poona or preferably Bombay. Pant would greatly prefer to have a surgeon of his choice. If the operation is to take place, it is unlikely that Govt. will keep him on as a detenu or prisoner in hospital.

It is a pity that Pant has allowed his condition to deteriorate by his policy of 'carrying on'. He ought to have taken himself in hand and had an operation at least a year ago. The hernia trouble began here. Some of his ways rather irritate me, but he is one of the most likable men I know—a perfect gentleman and straight as an arrow. Indeed his neglect of his health here has been due to his good qualities. I do hope he recovers for we have few men so intelligent and honourable as he is.

x x x x

A virulent outbreak of plague has taken place in Ahmadnagar city—six deaths 24 hours after seizure. Sendak was terribly alarmed and suggested inoculation. Most of us rather hesitated, though I suppose if we were certain of the danger we would immediately agree to inoculation. Personally I have a distaste for it and would like to avoid it. Meanwhile, the situation in the city has improved. After 8 deaths no further cases have been reported.

x x x x

Yesterday—26th January—we also completed 900 days here in Ahmadnagar Fort!

January 27. 1945

Darling Indu,

I have your letter of the 13th but the enclosure which you mentioned (a cutting from *The Hindusthan Standard* sent by Gaganvchari Mehta)⁶⁰⁹ was not there.

I suppose the cold has moderated now—it usually does soon after *Vasanta Panchami*. How the poor must have suffered for lack of warm

609. (1900-1974); President, Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industries, 1942-43; Member, Planning Commission, 1950-52; Ambassador to the U.S.A., 1952-58; Chairman, National Shipping Board, 1959-63; publications include *Conscience of a Nation*, *From Wrong Angles* and *Understanding India*.

things — I am glad you tried to help our servants, especially the women and children. But this help seldom goes far enough. For my part I like this kind of cold spell and immediately it drives me to the sun. Sunbaths can only be taken with comfort and profit if it is cold enough otherwise, or else the sun becomes too hot. A combination of a low temperature and sun's heat is really delightful, or so I find it. It exhilarates me and fills me with a sense of physical well-being. Unfortunately one can only take them with comfort for a few weeks even in Allahabad, and for a lesser period here. In Almora Prison during the winter (when there were no clouds) and during the spring I had a long spell of sun-bathing; and then later in Khali during the spring. Outside, apart from the suitability of the weather, the leisure to indulge in them is usually lacking.

Do not send me any clothes or foodstuffs. I have been able to purchase some warm coverings here. As for clothes, a warm *sherwani* would be welcome occasionally as I dislike being wrapped up in shawls & rugs. But it would be useful here probably for no more than two weeks or so at the most. That period has passed now and it is no more required. We need not therefore think about it till next winter.

I shall send you back some books, including the two belonging to Jinarajadasa, early next week. I think it is better for you to deal with these two books and return them to him. I read them as they had been especially sent to me but I must say that they were not up to much. Sava's *Russia Triumphant* was fairly interesting as a survey of past Russian history, but rather superficial. As for Citrine's *In Russia Now*, it is trivial in the extreme, which is not surprising as Citrine himself is a very pedestrian kind of person. The book is full of details about Citrine's adventures in shaving, having baths (or not having them), in food &c.⁶¹⁰ He tells us of his surprise that his bath towel had not been heated. All this from a Labour leader is odd enough, but with the background of Russia in October 1941, with a fierce war raging and Moscow itself seriously threatened by the invader and every man and woman in Russia strained to the utmost in connection with the war effort, with all this terrible crisis surrounding him when he was in Russia, Citrine is chiefly concerned with his personal comforts. This is truly amazing. I have long disliked the person but this little book of his has made me dislike him even more — a result which Jinarajadasa had probably not foreseen!

610. Citrine mentions the absence of hot water in his Kuibyshev hotel and difficulties in finding running water in three consecutive chapters in his book.

It struck me as curious that Jinarajadasa should send me these particular books. They are not a brilliant choice anyway. Probably he wanted me to know something about Russia. A worthy ambition, but what exactly does he take me for? Obviously as a person who is singularly ignorant of world affairs and especially of Russia. If he thinks so of me, even though I am supposed to have a reputation of possessing some knowledge of these affairs, what does he think of the average intelligent Indian? I fear he has lost touch with Indian currents of thought. This was evident to some extent from some press interviews of his. As a matter of fact developments in Russia are known and appreciated in India probably more than in most countries. I am sorry that Jinarajadasa should move in such a narrow groove of ideas, for he is able and intelligent. But all of us become prisoners of our own set of thoughts and can seldom look out of that framework. I do not want you, of course, to convey these opinions of mine to Jinarajadasa. It was good of him to send me the books and he should be thanked for them.

I have received *Anna Karenina*—2 volumes. I wonder if you can get for me a Persian-English and English-Persian dictionary—not a big tome but a small students' dictionary if this is available. Ask Kitabistan to get it for me.

I have been getting the foreign periodicals you send more regularly now and in larger numbers though even now odd numbers are missing. I keep returning them to you in batches. I hope you get them.

The guavas reached us in good condition and were appreciated.

Rajiva will be six months old in another three weeks. That is a landmark for him. Usually the *anna-prasana* ceremony or the खीरचढाई⁶¹¹ takes place about then. Are you going to have this soon? So far as I know you have not had a formal naming ceremony so far. Why not combine the two? I hope he is flourishing.

I do not know that Anna was with you, or I had forgotten—If you feel that she is not helpful, there is no particular point in keeping her on. You are the best judge. If you decide to part with her, give her sufficient time to make other arrangements.

You might have seen in the papers that plague has broken out in Ahmadnagar city. We learnt that it was of a peculiarly virulent type, but so far it has only affected a few persons. Possibly it may not spread. We are naturally rather cut off from the city and there is not much chance of infection. Still the question of plague inoculation arose. If I feel that it is necessary I shall take it, but I have a certain instinctive aversion to these inoculations. Indeed this aversion extends even to drugs

611. *Khirchatai*—Formal feeding ceremony of a child.

and I should like to avoid them as far as possible. The idea of filling my body with undesirable concoctions puts me out, and yet sometimes I have to do it. Intellectually I have to appreciate the value of medicine and inoculations, though I do think that this is overdone. On the whole I have had singularly little to do with drugs and medicines. Bernard Shaw, in his latest book, attacks vaccinations and inoculations etc. with passion, and a part of me reacts favourably to his denunciation. But then another part of me—how split up we are into different personalities!—accepts the drugs and the sera & vaccines. So if I come to the conclusion that inoculation against plague is necessary, I shall submit to it. The latest reports are that there have been no further plague cases in the city. So perhaps it may not be necessary to get inoculated.

Give my love to Madan Bhai. I hope he is keeping well.

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 99.

Feb. 3, 1945

Darling Indu,

I have your letter of the 26th Jan.—also Betty's of that date. I read both your accounts of Vidya's wedding and the people you met there with interest, especially Betty's references to children growing up. How the world is changing while I remain here!

Some of us decided to take the inoculation for plague and so day before yesterday I had an injection. This was only half the dose, the other half will follow a week later. It is better to take it this way, unless the emergency is great. I have had a more or less normal reaction, slight rise in temperature &c. The next injection will bring about another reaction, possibly slightly greater, and I shall not return to my normal existence here for another week or ten days.

Betty writes that the Anand Phawan garden was looking very attractive, especially the front lawn with its bright winter flowers. What interested me more was her description of you and Rajiva—how lovely and fit you looked and how the babe was flourishing. I suppose the little tyrant not only determines most of your activities but also is the principal factor in the functioning of the household. I think of him and you often and I wonder how motherhood*has changed you. Indu,

the mother, is almost a stranger to me and I have to gather scraps of information, as well as occasionally some deeper insight, from words and phrases in your letters. A mother is represented, quite rightly, as an embodiment of love and tenderness and care. With all this goes a protective pugnacity, an offensiveness so far as the care of the child is concerned, something of the relation of the tigress to her cub. Do you feel a bit like the tigress? I can hardly imagine it and yet I suppose there must be that element present in you; indeed we all have some part of the tiger or tigress about us.

Khali seems to be fading off as a prospective resort for you next summer. The chief disadvantage seems to me the lack of suitable companions. A longish stay there, more or less alone, is likely to be dull. If Sheila cannot go, as you write, then I cannot think of others who might be able to join you there — But probably you can raise others from your circle of friends and acquaintances. Apart from the question of companionship, I am sure the place is ideal for a stay both for you and for Rajiva. The journey itself is a very easy and delightful one and need cause no worry, whether you go by bridle path or motor road. We have got so used to railway trains and the like that a reversion to older methods of transport appears odd and uncomfortable. It is not always so, especially in the hills. It is too early to decide and ultimately much will depend on how Rajiva is faring three months hence. Anyway your mother-instinct will guide you aright and you should trust it. One advantage about Khali is that no elaborate and previous arrangements are necessary. The place is there and can be fitted up in a day or two. Whether you go there or not, it would be desirable to inform the people there that you are likely to come. This will keep them up to the mark and the house and garden will be better looked after. Just at present they must be buried in snow.

If one is to trust the newspapers Rajiva is growing so fast that he is likely to catch you up before long. About two months ago or less he was described as eight months old and now he is said to have attained the status of one-year-old.

I have long been worried about the servants' quarters attached to Anand Bhawan. They are disreputable, or at any rate, those on the lower level. The lavatory arrangements are very undesirable, and generally the roofs are in a state of disrepair. I should like some radical improvements to be made but I suppose this will be difficult just at present. Anyway I suggest that you ask Ladli Bhai to have them repaired and renovated in so far as possible, and if necessary to add constructionally to them in a small way. Generally some patchwork repairs are undertaken hurriedly just before the rains. This is not good

enough. If the matter is taken in hand now there will be plenty of time and a good job can be done.

I should have liked to allot small pieces of land in a corner of the garden to some of our older servants for growing vegetables for their own use. This would not only add to their normal food but also be good employment for their children. Even a tiny patch grows good vegetables and quite a quantity — like tomatoes. But I do not see where the land for this to be found. It should be near their quarters. Perhaps something could be done to the patch — the lowland between their quarters and the rise leading to the main house. It is difficult for me to make any definite suggestion without examining the layout. But you and Feroze can consider this & see if anything can be done. Perhaps you are already using this bit of land for vegetables. Anyway it would be desirable to have proper hedges to separate the servants quarters as well as to mark the path leading to the hospital. Feroze, expert gardener as he has proved to be, can make the best use of this patch both for productive and decorative purposes.

Dadu's old law books were badly treated and for many years have been neglected. The old law library was divided up, or rather it disintegrated. I think a considerable number of *American Reports* were sent to the Hindu University. Many books were sold. The rest he gave to Ranjit. I felt sorry later that any books were sold as I hate the idea of any of his old books knocking about from place to place. I was myself guilty of this partly — so far as his medical books were concerned — and I repented soon after. At that time the main incentive was to get rid of everything that seemed unnecessary and thus to lighten our burden. There was not enough room in the new Anand Bhawan for all our books. Well that has been done — Now the only question is what to do with the remains of that law library which are rapidly deteriorating in a godown. I am quite clear that they should not be auctioned or sold in any other way. As a matter of fact they would not fetch any considerable sum of money, as all the best books were previously picked out. But apart from the money question they should not be sold. To give them over to the Hindu University Law Library would be the right thing to do. It is not much of a gift either in quantity or quality but still it may be of some use there. To it might be added the series of *State Trials*, which you will find in our library — eastern side. Books should be kept where they are most appreciated and used.

I am sure *Puphi* will agree to this proposal. Still it is perhaps better to get her direct approval. I have written to her about it and asked her to let you know. Meanwhile, you should get the old books cleaned, arranged and listed. That is some job which should keep Upadhyaya

busy for a while. You mention that the key of the place is with *Puphi*. She could not have taken the key with her — Perhaps it is with Nadir Gazder — If you cannot find the key you might as well have the lock forced open.

Among the books, probably there are a number of non-legal books. These should be separated. There used to be also a large number of copies of the *River of Kings* — the *Rajatarangini* — where are these?

I have already read *Best Stories from Modern Bengal*. *Puphi* sent it to me.

As for Nilima's suggestion that I should get any future book of mine published at her Signet Press, it is much too early for me to think of any publication. When the time comes I shall bear this in mind. I have no doubt that this press can do a good job so far as printing &c. are concerned. But even more important factors are the business ability and experience of publishing behind a concern — I have had a large experience of Indian publishing houses and they are quite remarkably lacking in these qualities. Their unbusiness-like methods have been a constant source of irritation to me. Modern publishing is not so much concerned with producing a limited artistic product but with widespread sales of low-priced and well-produced books. But all this is not meant for Nilima.

Do not trouble yourself about Bengue's Balsam or Thermogene — I wanted some such stuff for Pantji especially. He has managed to get various creams and ointments, including Thermogene, Huxley's Wintogene or Schering's Balsam &c. So far as I am concerned I seldom need these. Sometimes I develop a sprain in the wrist or ankle or a slight pain in the arm.

I wonder if you could send some American periodicals (after I have returned them to you) to Sucheta Kripalani, Central Prison, Lucknow. She is all alone there now and would be cheered up by these magazines &c. Send those you consider suitable for her — You need not send her all but an occasional packet will be welcomed.

Some days ago I sent you the following books :

- | | | |
|--|---|----------------|
| 1 Citrine's <i>In Russia Now</i> | } | Jinarajadasa's |
| 2 George Sava's <i>Russia Triumphant</i> | | |
| 3 Thoreau : <i>Walden</i> | | |
| 4 Radhakrishnan : <i>India and China</i> | | |
| 5 Childe : <i>What Happened in History</i> | | |
| 6 Horace Alexander — <i>India since Cripps</i> | | |
| 7 Shah : <i>India's Place in Post-War Reconstruction</i> | | |
| 8 <i>The Call to Badrinath</i> | | |

Last week we received some dry fruit, *laddus*, *halva* (गाजर का हलवा)⁶¹² &c. I was told later that you had sent it for me. Did you send it?

Betty writes that Shirodkar refused to charge his fees for your confinement. She suggests that some present should be given to him instead on your behalf. You had better arrange this. Personally I prefer to pay fees than to be worried about presents.

About subscriptions to American periodicals, you need not write to any — Anyway, one cannot send money to America from India without all manner of permits. I have written to Chand to ask Walsh to arrange to continue all the periodicals.

Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* which you sent me belongs to Lakshmi and Sushila, Kapil Deva's daughters. What are these girls doing now? Are they in college? I heard some time ago that the Malaviya clan did not approve of them because they had not stuck to all the old practices and customs.

I am enclosing the dividend warrant, duly endorsed.

This letter is No. 100 - I complete the century.

Love

Your loving
Papu

6.2.45

Darling Bets,

I have your letter of January 26th. I was looking forward to it as I expected you to give me some news of the people you had met at Vidya's wedding. I have lost touch with so many of them, not only during the two and a half years of my stay in Ahmadnagar Fort but even previously. When I have met them occasionally in the past there have been two dominant and rather contradictory sensations. The older generation seemed to have remained where it was, more or less unchanged in a changing world, static and moving in the same old groove, only growing older and more wrinkled, like some old picture which is slowly fading off and developing cracks and is covered with film and dust. The growing generation changing rapidly in appearance, as growing children do, and almost unrecognizable, rather attractive, some of the girls particularly so, and apparently full of promise. Yet, somehow as they grow

612. *Gajar ka halva*—A sweet made of carrots.

older that promise is seldom fulfilled and they tend to become replicas of their static parents. Because of some external changes, or a few new habits and ways of living they imagine and we imagine that some inner change has also taken place. Perhaps in a very few this does take place, but they appear to be very few and soon, they settle down in the old grooves. Even those few who adopt more aggressive roles in life are different on the surface only and the depths, if there are any, are not affected. It may be that I am mistaken about the very young today for I do not know them. Even these years, and especially years full of tension, make a difference. Change there must have been and must continue. But the slowness of the process is depressing. Our middle classes, I fear, are a singularly devitalized lot as a whole, or they are too confused between the old and the new, and, being terribly cautious and afraid of taking risks, cling on to the remarks of the old.

It made me happy to read your account of the Anand Bhawan garden. I visualized it and a picture of bright flowers and hedges and garden paths rose up before me, another prospect was pleasing—perhaps even more pleasing than if I had seen it myself. It brought to mind the continuation of life and beauty in nature in spite of the petty troubles that fill our minds temporarily. As for Kajiva, I am beginning to fear that all you people will succeed in spoiling him! I am not very anxious to see him just yet. I would like to see him when he is about a year old and can stand up and toddle about a little.

Love

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

February 10. Saturday

Yesterday we completed two and a half years here in Ahmadnagar Fort!

x

x

x

x

Some of us decided to take the plague inoculation after all. Instead of taking the full injection of 2 cc. at one time, it was considered better to have two injections of 1 cc. each at an interval of a week. On Feb. 1st four of us—Maulana, Asaf, Mahtab & I—took the first

injection. On the whole mild reaction — slight rise in temperature, pain & swelling &c., except in Maulana's case. He had fairly high fever for a day or so.

Two days ago, on Feb. 8th, we had the second injection. Sendak warned us that the reaction after this would be worse. As a matter of fact it has been even milder.

Feb. 10, 1945

Darling Indu,

Two days ago I — and some others here — took our second injection of the plague stuff. This completes the inoculation. We have been told that the reaction to this would be more marked but as a matter of fact it has been milder than the previous one. In another two or three days' time I expect to be quite normal. The inoculation is supposed to be effective — so we are told — for six months only. Rather a short time. Anyway you can rest assured now that those of us who have been inoculated will not get the bubonic plague — whatever other plagues might infect us — for at least six months.

In my last letter I asked you if you had sent me some dried fruit, *halva*, *laddus* &c.— Since then I have received a letter from Amma from Lahore in which she mentions sending me some eatables — What they are she does not say. I suppose this lot came from her.

The additional books from Jinarajadasa, as well as the other books you mention having sent, have not reached me yet. I think I have already read Nilima's *When the Moon Died*.

You might put down in your list of desirable books, to be obtained when available, the following three:

- | | | | |
|---|------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| 1 | Rosamond Lehmann | : | <i>The Ballad and the Source</i> |
| 2 | Penderel Moon | : | <i>Strangers in India</i> |
| 3 | Do Do | : | <i>The Future of India</i> |

All the three were published in London — the first two last year and the third only recently. This third will certainly not be available here for some time. Perhaps the other two have reached India.

I am not surprised to learn that Madan Bhai looked dazed and aged on his emergence from jail. But I hope he will recover. He looked pretty feeble after his hard life and starvation diet during the Civil War in Spain and later in China. But this has been a new and probably more trying experience for him.

The cigarette-holder you sent me has come to grief. It fell on a stone floor and cracked up. However I am using its broken-up pieces. This is my letter No. 101.

Your loving
Papu

February 17, 1945

Darling Indu,

I have your letter of Feb. 9th. Now that I know that both you and Rajiva are keeping well, it does not matter much if your letters do not come regularly. So do not trouble about this. Write only when you feel in the mood for it. It is seldom worthwhile to write when there is no particular urge to do so. I write fairly regularly as there are only a limited number of activities here and inevitably one develops a routine.

I have read in the papers the answer which Mudie, the Home Member gave in the Central Assembly about the health of the internees in Ahmadnagar Fort.⁶¹³ He said that I had had an attack of lumbago but had recovered from it. We are used to odd and novel statements made on behalf of the Government and try not to be surprised. But it was something of a surprise for me to associate lumbago with myself. I looked up the word in the dictionary for I was not clear about its precise significance—I found that it was a 'rheumatic affection in loins'. Certainly I have not had, recently or at any other time, any such 'affection', and so I conclude that I have never had lumbago. There appears to be something wrong about the sources or channels of the information that reaches Govt. Normally this error is the outcome of a desire to tone down something or make it appear, as far as language can help, to be something other than it is. But there was no particular reason for saying that I had lumbago when I had suffered from no such malady. I imagine that the lapse was due to carelessness or inefficiency somewhere, or mixing me up with another person here who did have lumbago. It is true that I had a slight pain in my left shoulder

613. He had stated on 10 February 1945 that all members of the Congress Working Committee were well, except Govind Ballabh Pant, who might have to be operated on for hernia. Jawaharlal had an attack of lumbago but had recovered and Vallabhbhai Patel, who had for years suffered from a spastic colon, was well.

and round about it for some days. It was not much but it interfered with my sleep and exercises. What annoyed me was that I should have had it at all for any bodily weakness or disability irritates me. I got over it by massage and fomentation and especially sunbaths. I have been completely free from it and have been indulging in my exercises as usual. The plague inoculation came in the way but that too is over with all its after effects.

I have received the books and a pamphlet which Jinarajadasa sent you — They are :

- 1 Sean O'Faolain : *The Great O'Neill*
- 2 H. Fortes Anderson : *Borderline Russia*
- 3 Jinarajadasa : *Economics and Theosophy*

The Human Situation, which you mentioned, was not in this lot.

I might mention that I have also received the two new books from Rupa & Co. who sometimes send me books. These are: Wavell's *Allenby in Egypt* and A. L. Rowse: *The English Spirit*.⁶¹⁴ Wavell's book was in a list of books required that I sent you last year. You can strike it off from it.

I have returned the following books to you:

- 1 Julian Huxley : *On Living in a Revolution*
- 2 Shaukat Ansari : *Pakistan*
- 3 Borodin : *Soviet & Tsarist Siberia*
- 4 Nym Wales : *New China*
- 5 Tikhov Semushkin : *Children of the Soviet Arctic*
- 6 *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*
- 7 Alexei Tolstoy : *My Country*
- 8 Dean of Canterbury : *The Socialist Sixth of the World*
- 9 Do : *Soviet Strength*
- 10 *Correspondence with Mr. Gandhi* (Government publication)

Semushkin's *Children of the Soviet Arctic* I found rather fascinating reading. It is simply written, but the account of change creeping in, or rather sweeping in, into those remote areas is very interesting. Apart from this, the Arctic and wide stretches of snow and ice have always attracted me.

I have read in the newspapers that Rafi has been transferred to Naini Prison. Why he should have been transferred to a place where special medical attention is not easily available is difficult to understand, more especially at this time of the year with the summer looming ahead. I wonder if you could arrange to send him fresh fruit regularly. What

614. It is a collection of reviews and essays in which Rowse presents a series of portraits of great Englishmen.

the jail rules are about this I do not know but you can easily find out if you do not know them already. You can put Upadhyaya in charge of it and either he or Khaliq can carry the parcel, say once a week.

Probably Rafi will appreciate books even more than fruit. Books are apt to get waylaid or lost when sent to prison. I have lost many that way, including a parcel of them sent to Rafi to Barcilly in 1942. But that was not his fault as the books apparently never reached him. There is less danger of loss or disappearance if they are sent and recovered by messengers. Anyway the risk has to be taken for I should like Rafi to have good reading matter — You can pick out such books as you think suitable. A packet of three or four at a time can be sent and recovered when the next packet goes.

Also foreign periodicals, even though they are pretty old. I asked you in my last letter to send some of these to Sucheta Kripalani. Some might be sent to her, but I would like a more regular supply to go to Rafi. *Life & Time* and other magazines are likely to interest him.

I suppose Hari airs my old clothes from time to time. There are, I believe, still some of *Dadu's*, *Dol Amma's* and *Mummy's* clothes and belongings lying about in boxes and trunks. Ask Hari to look after them properly and air them &c.

Betty must have left Allahabad — I am very glad she spent two or three weeks in Anand Bhawan. I wish Harsha and Ajit had been there also to run about the garden.

Betty writes that when *Nani* and *Bappi* were in Anand Bhawan they messed about with your old presents, clothes, jewellery &c. and even took some away for disposal or exchange on your behalf. I was rather amused to read this and yet I realised how all this must have upset you — I am sure they meant well and anyway it does not matter much. But what does matter is your reaction to such happenings. Life is full of petty and unimportant events which for the moment loom large, upset our composure and thus unnecessarily hurt us and add to our difficulties. We have to treat them in proper perspective and not allow them to interfere with the path of our choice. *Nani* is a dear and would hate to hurt you in any way and yet it is obvious that her way of looking at things is entirely different from yours or mine, and unconsciously she may do much, imagining that she is doing it for your good, when actually she is rubbing you up all the wrong way. Probably there is far less difference between your outlook and mine than between yours and *Nani's*. Yet even between you and me there is bound to be a difference in approach to many things. We accommodate ourselves to these differences, adjust them from day to day easily enough because over a vast

area there is a common outlook, and because we realize that an appreciation of each other's differences is not only the salt of life but actually helps in bringing about closer understanding. Apart from other factors, age itself is a dividing factor. For age to impose itself on youth—how frequently that happens!— is one of the major misfortunes.

To submit to others against one's own decided inclinations leads to a sense of frustration and unhappiness; to be always on the offensive and coming into conflict with others leads to unhappiness all round. One has to find a middle way which can hardly be defined, but which may be said to be a gentle considerate approach and yet a firm adherence to one's own ways. Stick to what you want to do, and do it, but in doing so be as considerate to others as possible. Do not allow yourself to be pushed about too much by other people's opinions. We cannot be too hard on others but we cannot also be too soft or else we become just a flabby mass.

So if *Nani* wanted you to do something which you did not approve of or want to do, you should have made it perfectly clear to her that this should not be done. It seems absurd to me for you, at her instance, to worry about your old presents &c. or agree to dispose of them—Why should you?

As I have said above, this is a very trivial matter and hardly deserves a moment's thought. But I have doled out to you good advice so that you may apply it, if you approve of it, to other circumstances and other people also. And that includes me! I have a way of throwing out suggestions as they come into my mind. Do not attach too much importance to them. Consider them, certainly and then do what you think best—That would please me far more than the thought that you were just carrying out my wishes and not your own—This would apply at any time, even when I am with you but it applies much more now when I am far away and we cannot discuss any matter. Listen to others but trust your own instinct and your own thought.

I do not know what a normal person is, but whatever normality may be I do not fit in with it, and as I grow older I fit in less and less with it. That of course does not mean that I am very peculiar. But I grow less suited to the normal domestic and social life in India. I enjoy it in bits and with some people I enjoy it more than with others. Nevertheless a distaste for it grows in me and I do not see why I should waste my time in inane activities and in meeting third-rate people. Obviously this background is not a normal one and it is hardly a social one, in a narrow sense of the word. Also I have only a vague sense of money and property and refuse to worry myself about either. I cannot understand why people get excited about them. All this makes me peculiarly

unsuited to advise others, and even you, for there is no reason whatever why you should live, mentally or physically, in the rather confined or isolated world which fills my mind. I am terrified occasionally at the thought that I might be imposing my peculiar ways on you. I want you to be perfectly free and not allow even your love for me to limit that freedom. The bondage of affection can sometimes be a heavy one.

As I was writing this letter I received a packet of books from you.

- 1 *The Human Situation*
- 2 Swami Nikhilananda's *Bhagavad Gita*
- 3 Vivekananda's *Lectures from Colombo to Almora*
- 4 Do Letters
- 5 Do Karma Yoga
- 6 Nilima's *When the Moon Died*

and some pamphlets, including a reprint of some old speech of mine—Also Thermogene—Thank you—

Betty seems to have decided to go to Kashmir—She suggests that you might accompany her. If you could manage it, it would be excellent. You know that for me there is no place like Kashmir. But you have to take Rajiva into consideration. There is no obvious reason why he should not benefit by a visit to Kashmir, in spite of the long journey. Anyway you will be the best person to decide—Khali just by yourself and Rajiva is not an attractive proposition.

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 102.

Feb. 24, 1945

Darling Indu,

I have just received your letter of the 17 Feb.—No. 96. I read something about the Hospital Week in the papers. This collection business is always very troublesome, in India more so than elsewhere for here people expect personal visits. I have an extreme dislike for doing such work. However it has to be done, I suppose, and it helps us to gain an insight into other peoples' minds and habits—not always a pleasant sight to see. We cannot expect much financial help from other parts of India for after all the hospital can only cater for local needs. So it

is as well that the people of Allahabad should feel that it is their responsibility.

I am glad you have decided to go to Kashmir with *Choti Puphi*—Kashmir must always remain first choice for a holiday. Your going there means that a bit of myself also goes and I feel a sense of exhilaration at the prospect. Ramlal's⁶¹⁵ house is good. But do you propose to spend most of your time in Srinagar? Probably Betty would prefer that and anyway Srinagar is pleasant enough and many small excursions can be arranged from there—I don't think a house boat is particularly healthy for a small child, though many children live there. A tent is much better. Perhaps later on you might move to a higher valley for a while. That depends on how Rajiva fares with his teething. Normally I should not worry about any very special arrangements for him.

Is Anna going to stay on with you and will she accompany you to Kashmir? Anyway you had better take Tulsi and Hari.

There are rumours again about our possible transfer to a U.P. prison—I have always attached little importance to these but perhaps there may be some slight basis for them this time as, in any event, Pantji is in need of an operation. An operation of course does not necessitate a transfer to the U.P. It means Pantji's transfer to a good hospital where a good surgeon is available. Some people in the Central Assembly and elsewhere seem to be anxious to get us transferred though why they should feel that way I do not know. For my part a prison is a prison anywhere and minor changes make little difference. It is the prison that counts, not the place where the prison is situated, except to some extent in regard to the climate. The prospect of summer in the U.P. plains is not exactly alluring—that is in a prison. Still it really does not make much difference, and if one day we are told that we are being sent elsewhere, like some commodities who have no choice in the matter, we shall gather up our belongings and march out, in due secrecy, from one enclosure to another. There will be a break in our routine here, a bustling and an unusual activity, and then quiet will again reign here, and elsewhere we shall settle down to another routine.

The only possible advantage of a transfer to one's province is to facilitate interviews. That advantage does not apply to us and I do not propose to take interviews elsewhere. So it makes not the slightest difference whether you are a hundred miles or a thousand miles away from me for in either event the barriers remain.

As for interviews the reasons which actuated us not to take them remain, but, apart from them, there is a personal reason which counts

615. Dewan Ramlal, brother of Dewan Chamanlal.

with me. Jail interviews are seldom satisfactory and often disturbing. There is no normality about them and a sense of tension persists. The conditions under which they are usually held are irritating. Emotionally they are rather upsetting; feelings long restrained and dammed up have a glimpse of a narrow outlet and yet are unable to adapt themselves to it, and the half-hour or so passes rapidly without any adjustment and leaving a hollowness and hunger behind. All this normally in prison even when interviews have been a regular event. We have of course often taken these interviews.

But it is a very different matter to be isolated for two and a half years and then to have this brief, restricted and uncomfortable interview under the grim shadow of jail walls and under the supervision of jail officials. When I meet you again, wherever that may be, I might remain silent for some time, just looking at you and trying to find out what you are now, how you have changed, what private universe you inhabit; or I might break out in unmeaning talk as a reaction from the long silence, a torrent of words trying to cover my own shyness and uneasiness, reaching out and seeking for something which eludes me. Gradually, as we see more of each other, we shall adjust ourselves as we understand each other afresh. But this cannot and will not happen in a jail interview, and though even sight, after the long absence of it, fills a vacuum somewhere, a heartache remains and is accentuated, and the gnawing feeling of emptiness continues. And so I feel that it is better for me to avoid these jail interviews. When I see you, I want to see much of you, quietly, normally and with a feeling of freedom and leisure. Till that is possible, I had rather not meet you.

It is odd to think that for over two and a half years I have not seen women or children. Even the men we have seen have been strictly limited in number and quality — and so our conception of Homo sapiens must undergo some change—It will not be particularly easy to adapt oneself to the wider world after this experience and always there will be a sense of unreality about it or of a double life —

Yet of course we shall adapt ourselves though we may carry that mark on our foreheads and in our eyes. I think I am peculiarly adaptable for I have gradually reduced the mental luggage I have to carry. That is why, I think, I can go off to a distant country at a moment's notice without much inconvenience. Betty, in her last letter, said something of the many arrangements necessary for the proposed visit to Kashmir. I suppose all that is necessary — And yet I would be prepared to go to the Arctic region or to any other far away spot without much mental or other preparation.

I have sent you the following :

- | | | | |
|---|--------|---|---------------------------|
| 1 | Katrak | : | <i>Oriental Treasures</i> |
| 2 | Pandya | : | <i>The Holy Gita</i> |
| 3 | Nilima | : | <i>When the Moon Died</i> |
| 4 | | | <i>Hungry Bengal</i> |

and periodicals.

The pamphlet of the Hindustan Hamara people which you sent me — containing a speech of mine — has reached me. For a moment I could not place it. Yet I realized soon enough that it was a speech of mine, though when and where delivered I do not know. Obviously it was an extempore speech and the text has been taken from a newspaper report, and like all such reports it is faulty. I have no objection to the Hindustan Hamara people issuing it, but they should have sent previous intimation. What is more important is that they should have stated the occasion, place and date of the speech and the fact that it was taken from a newspaper report. A careful revision by a competent person would have removed some of its obvious errors and redundancies.

Among the books which you are noting down for me, please put down Toynbee's *A Study of History*⁶¹⁶—I have an idea it is in my room but I am by no means sure. If you cannot find it, then you will have to purchase it. There is no hurry. I have plenty of reading matter with me. Toynbee's book is big — more than one volume I think.

Only three days ago I wrote to Betty not to send me any honey as there was always danger of breakage. Yesterday four big bottles full of honey were delivered to me — sent by her. Now that it has come, we shall of course consume it with pleasure.

Once you wrote to me that you proposed to fix up a Chinese room, and an especially Indian room, in Anand Bhawan. Did you give shape to your ideas?

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 103.

616. By 1939 Toynbee had published six volumes of *A Study of History*—the first three deal with his claim that civilizations, not nations, are the determining factors in history and that the life of a civilization is the story of its challenges and responses to environmental conditions and the second three with the breakdown and disintegration of civilizations.

March 2. Friday

It seems settled that all of us are going to be transferred to our respective provinces. For some time past there have been rumours of this and references in the newspapers. I discounted them. It was clear, however, that Pantji would go somewhere for his operation. That an operation is necessary for him has been admitted by Govt. Some official answers in the Central Assembly have indicated that others are also likely to be sent.

I am not at all anxious to be sent to another prison, especially on the eve of summer. It will certainly be hotter in the U.P. and living conditions in any U.P. jail will be worse than here. However, it really does not matter much and we shall gradually develop new routines.

How long have we been here? On Jan. 26th we completed 900 days here. So now we have been 934 days (up to today) — a big chunk out of one's life. It has been a curious experience for us all I suppose and whatever the future may bring, we twelve, or ten now, will not be thrown together in this way again.

We have been told nothing definite about our transfer. Sendak's ideas of secrecy are curious and primitive. I imagine that we shall be sent away by the middle of this month.

March 3, 1945

Darling Indu,

I have been sending you lately rather longish letters and I think you need some relief from them. Anyway a short one for a change ought to be welcome — Or, perhaps, the real reason is that my mind today is rather a blank so far as letter writing is concerned. It is not quite a blank of course for there is much that fills its odd corners and leads me to muse and travel leisurely along its corridors. Sometimes these wanderings lead to what appear to be blind alleys, and sometimes there are distant and alluring vistas. So we build up, each one of us, private and individual worlds of our own, touching and overlapping other people's worlds, and yet remaining always our very own, different from the others. And these worlds become a refuge and a shelter, and sometimes also a prison through whose invisible, and yet nonetheless effective, iron bars we peep out at others and the wide world outside us. Those strong bars of the spirit rather isolate us and we feel incapable of crossing over to the

other side, but occasionally they seem to melt away and we become one with others and sense a feeling of communion with nature and the world.

Holi has come and gone, the spring festival, which has already the promise, or is it in India the threat, of the coming summer. It is I think the most delightful of our festivals, or should be such if we had not got so tied up in our minds and activities, not knowing exactly what to do and what not to do, pulled in different directions and constrained by circumstance, doubtful of each other and ourselves and what we stand for. *Holi* is the essence of spontaneity, of exuberant joy and merry-making, of a breaking of bonds that separate and a meeting together of all on an equal and democratic footing. How far it is from what it should be and probably used to be for we lack spontaneity and the spirit of merry-making, and joy is a scarce-known visitor.

Holi was Dol Amma's birthday. Most of these festivals of ours are associated in my mind with some event, some happening in my life. *Vasanta Panchami* was my wedding day; *Raksha-bandhan* and the *Dashra* bring numerous memories; so also *Diwali*.

I have been receiving letters occasionally from *Puphi* from America—They are interesting and fill in somewhat the brief accounts of her activities that appear in the papers—I write to her sometimes but the long delay in receiving letters—the average period for an airmail letter is about five weeks—rather puts me off writing. I am asking her to bring me a gift—a new Parker pen of the latest type—No. '51' I think it is called.

When do you propose to go to Lahore on your way to Kashmir? I suppose you will remain in Allahabad for the whole of this month—

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 104.

March 8—Thursday

Since I wrote last in this journal our impending transfer has filled our minds and interfered with the normal routine of our lives here. So far as we know, no definite instructions have come yet. But several answers to questions in the Central Assembly make it clear that a transfer has been definitely decided and that we are likely to be separated and

sent to our respective provinces. Everyday the papers contain rumours of this transfer—of where we are to be sent. It has been said that Pantji, Kripalani & I, and presumably Narendra Deva also, would be sent to the U.P. The Bareilly jail (District or Central?) has been mentioned for us. Again it has been said that I am likely to be sent to Dehra Dun. Vallabhbhai to be sent to Yeravda or Sabarmati. Shanker Rao to Yeravda. Pattabhi to Vellore, Mahtab to Cuttack or Berhampore, Maulana to Alipur prison and Asaf Ali presumably to Delhi. Pantji's release for his operation has also been hinted at. So we live in a state of indecision about the future but with this conviction that we are all going to be sent away soon. This is taken for granted and though we do not pack or otherwise get ready for the journey, a kind of mental preparation goes on. Also something more than that. A large number of packing cases appeared yesterday meant for our books, for we have collected a considerable number of them.

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This thought of transfer, of our going different ways, naturally led us to meet together and have some talks about the future. During these two & a half years we have avoided these joint talks about political developments, though there have been occasional talks and discussions between smaller groups. Maulana called us together on the 3rd and referring to the report of the transfer and especially to the impression abroad that we were anxious for such a transfer, suggested that we might write to Govt. and tell them that this impression was wrong. Of course Govt. could send us where they chose and it was not very material to us whether we stayed here or were kept in a different prison. Maulana's suggestion was not approved. Nearly all of us said that on the whole we would prefer to stay on here together to being sent to other jails separately. But everyone (apart from Maulana) felt that we should not write to Govt. on this question. Govt. have a way of exploiting anything that we may write to them—usually phrases torn out of their context. So it was decided that no letter be sent to Govt.

I then suggested that we might consider various future problems so that we might at least know each other's mind before we separated. This was agreed to and we have been meeting every afternoon for two hours, from 2 to 4 p.m., taking up each matter separately. So far we have had five such sittings and they are continuing.

The first question we considered was our attitude to interviews &c. in other jails. Should we continue to refuse interviews? After some discussion it was agreed that we should not have interviews unless

some extraordinary need arose—such as Pantji's operation which necessitated interviews and instructions. Also Narendra Deva's old mother aged 80 was anxious to see him and it would be a grievous blow to her to be told that he would not have an interview with her even though she was on the eve of death. Similar contingencies might arise for others also but, generally speaking, interviews were not to be taken. Each individual would have to judge for himself.

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We then went on to discuss a matter which is apparently agitating Congress minds outside—the attitude that Congress should take up towards Communists. This had nothing to do with the basic principles of communism or social change but with the political, anti-Congress attitude taken up during the past 2½ years or more by the Communist Party in India. How was it possible to have Communists in the Congress, especially in Congress executives, when they were diametrically opposed to Congress policy and attacked Congress? It was obvious that Congressmen outside, most of whom had spent years in prison and had just been released, were bitter against the Communists, and in the ad hoc committees they had formed since their release, they had excluded Communists.

We had a long two-day discussion and the usual arguments were put forth. Shanker Rao, Kripalani and to some extent Pattabhi and Mahtab were for their exclusion in future. Others were opposed to it, or rather wanted to deal with individual cases of lapse and indiscipline and not with the group as such. Also there was the feeling that it was impossible to forecast the future which would be different from the past & the present and no hard & fast attitude could be laid down at present. Apart from national considerations, international factors would also have to be considered.

This led to a consideration of the larger question of other organised groups within the Congress—for instance the Socialists. Did not such groups with their separate mandates weaken Congress in action? No clear decision emerged but the general opinion was that we must not push out any group. We had to widen & strengthen the Congress and not to make it a narrower body.

About the Communists, it was agreed that the action taken by the ad hoc committees of representative Congressmen outside in not admitting Communists was thoroughly justified.⁶¹⁷ These committees were

617. In January-February 1945, the organisers of the Punjab Provincial Workers' Conference and Bihar Constructive Workers' Conference did not allow the Communists to participate in their conferences.

formed to carry on the constructive programme of the Congress—the Congress itself being illegal at present—and it would be absurd to include people in them who disagreed with that very programme.

This had nothing to do with the inclusion or exclusion of Communists from the Congress proper later on when the Congress could function normally.

Also it was agreed that later, when the occasion for it arose, disciplinary action could and should be taken against those, Communists & others, who had deliberately gone against Congress policy & attacked Congress during a period of action. This would be an individual matter—As for the larger question of groups, this could only be considered much later and its decision would depend on a number of national & international factors.

x x x x

Our talks continue. We are going to consider the picture of the future as we envisage it—of the Congress, the country, & the world; the communal problem; the Congress constructive programme &c., &c.

x x x x

The probability of transfer led me to look through my manuscript of *The Discovery of India*. Since my last revision in December, some small matters requiring change or addition had occurred to me and I had noted them down. I wanted to be finished with these before I left Ahmadnagar Fort. So I have spent a few hours with this MSS and added a few footnotes &c. Again I have finished with it and put it away—finally so far as I can judge at present, but then one never knows.

x x x x

Two days ago there was a small incident when I spoke rather harshly to Sendak the Supt. The fault was partly Shanker Rao's. My words hurt Sendak greatly. I felt sorry for him and the next morning I told him that I was sorry for having lost my temper and spoken rather roughly to him. He was greatly pleased at this and his face lighted up.

x x x x

Indu writes that poor Rajiva is having trouble with his ears, or rather one ear, and his throat. I have been anxious and waiting for further

news. People tell me here that this kind of thing is not uncommon and is not serious. Still I am worried. The idea of a child's suffering is more distressing than an adult's.

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As I was writing this I was given a sealed letter from Wavell dt. 1/3 —A brief letter enclosing a letter to him from Edward Thompson dt. Feb. 22. Edward has written a moving account of his son Frank's death in Bulgaria. How proud he is of Frank's abilities and heroism—and very rightly. I feel rather upset and terribly sad—I shall never meet Edward again—he is slowly dying.

I have read Edward's letter again—with tears in my eyes—The story of Frank's death and his courage will haunt me for a long time.

March 9, Friday

I wrote to Edward Thompson today and sent it with a covering letter to Wavell—sealed.

x

x

x

x

Indu's letter came today—Rajiva is better but apparently Indu has not been too well.

x

x

x

x

Last night I had again a nightmare accompanied by shouting but there was a difference from similar occurrences. I shouted or groaned as usual under some compulsion or fright or both. Pantji thereupon started coughing to distract my attention—he always does that. I heard his cough & voice, vaguely realised that he was near and trying to help, also knew that I was in bed—and yet I did not quite wake up and continued to some extent in the grip of that nightmare. The bedding itself seemed to be pressing me at the sides, crushing me almost, and a vague terror continued. So I tried to call out to Pantji asking him to come and help me. My voice must have sounded strained and not at all clear. Pantji made out that I was trying to say something in Hindustani to him. Previously, that is at an earlier stage of the nightmare, I have an idea that I was saying or shouting in English—get away! go away!

When Pantji came over to my bed I woke up slowly. I felt very exhausted as after some struggle. In rather a weak voice I thanked him & apologised for having troubled him.

What is all this business? What frightens me during these nightmares and compels me to shout 'go away'? I have no clear recollections. Immediately on waking up after a nightmare some pictures remain in the mind but they fade away very soon. Only a feeling of pressure & compulsion remains—something that strangles & throttles and crushes the body.

Is this just a reaction to jail? Or to events in India? Or to some inner personal disorder? Certainly it is not a healthy sign and I am beginning to get a little worried.

*March 9, 1945*⁶¹⁸

My dear Edward,

Through Lord Wavell's courtesy I have seen your letter to him of February 22 in which you give an account of Frank's death. Again, through his courtesy, I am sending you this letter.⁶¹⁹

You write with a father's pride and a father's sorrow, and you have reason for both, but many others will share that pride and sorrow. I have thought that if I had a son I would like him to die in some such way before life had stained him and added burdens which are sometimes heavier than death itself. It would be a grievous blow, but somehow a splendid death gives a deeper meaning to life and I am a little weary of the dull and meaningless round of life's normal activities. The story of Frank's heroic death will, as you say, haunt those who hear of it. There is so much to haunt us, so many memories, some vital and brief, others deadening and long-enduring, that we have become a haunted race. To seek some relief from these ghosts of our former selves we try to cultivate a measure of detachment. Sometimes I feel that I grow more detached, perhaps because of my Hindu inheritance, or perhaps it is the temper of the age which values life so cheaply. Death has become so common that it is no unexpected visitor. And yet the pull of life is strong and we continue to plan and build our dream castles for the future.

618. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

619. After his release Jawaharlal learnt from Wavell that he had mislaid this letter. On 12 August 1945 Jawaharlal sent a copy of it to Edward Thompson.

I remember Frank. He was almost a school boy when I saw him last. How these six and a half years must have changed and developed him; we age rapidly in these days. Often I thought of him and Palmer and wondered when I would meet them and what they would be like after their play with life and death. For long periods during my life I have not seen my friends and dear ones, and to fill that vacuum I build up a dream world of my own which is pleasanter in many ways than the factual world that surrounds us. Sometimes, vaguely, I wonder which is the real and which is the unreal—(Hindu inheritance again?). Not being religious, in the ordinary sense of the word, and having no particular views about the hereafter, yet having got used to being cut off from the world for long intervals, death itself seems just a longer interval.

No, I do not think death frightens me much. What terrifies me is the fearful load of hatred and bitterness that we accumulate all over the world and leave as a legacy to those who come after us. And so the old cycle goes on. In this barren desert the oases of friendship and understanding are few but very precious, and more and more I have come to realise how much they mean to me and to others. The books that you sent me have been my companions here and your occasional messages have brought you near to me. Often I have felt that physical companionship is only just one way, and not always the closest, of meeting together. We can overcome the lack of it and understand each other even more sometimes from a distance.⁶²⁰

You are ill and I am here and perhaps we may not meet again. And yet I do not know, for I have grown used to the unexpected happening. Whether we meet or not, I shall often think of you with affection and treasure the memory of our friendship. And so, whatever happens, may it be well with you.

Ever yours,
Jawaharlal

620. Edward Thompson replied on 11 September 1945: "...there is not much of value in these earth-days. But more and more I am sure that memory, and especially friendship, are of worth. I feel that you and I are in close sympathy over all things."

TO LORD WAVELL⁶²¹

Ahmadnagar Fort
9.3.45

Dear Lord Wavell,

Yesterday I received your note of March 1st with Edward Thompson's letter to you dated Feb. 22. I am grateful to you for enabling me to read Thompson's letter and for your offer to forward to him any letter that I might write. I am taking advantage of this offer and enclosing a letter for him. Presuming on your permission, I am keeping Thompson's letter to you.

In November last I received your letter of Oct. 31st 1944 and the three books that you sent—two of Thompson's and your anthology of poetry. As it was your desire, with which I wholly agreed, that your communication should be treated as entirely private, I refrained from writing to you directly then. I saw no way of writing to you and yet preventing others, in the chain through which my letters would have to pass, from knowing of it. I asked therefore the Home Dept. of the Bombay Govt. to inform your Private Secretary that I had received the message and the books and that I appreciated and was grateful for the courtesy.

Other Men's Flowers has brought to me many old favourites and reminded me of others that I had almost forgotten. It has also introduced me to a number of poems that were new to me. The book would have been welcome at any time and at any place, but it has been doubly so here.

Thanking you again,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

March 10, 1945

Darling Inou,

Two letters from you have reached me dated 25/2 and 1/3 — Nos. 97 and 98. The first one with news of Rajiva's ear-trouble rather worried me. I imagine that some infection had affected his throat and this had

621. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

spread to his ear. It is very difficult to prevent these infections for innumerable microbes infest the air. It depends ultimately on the individual's power of resistance. A baby can hardly be expected to have much of this. I gathered from people here that children often have some kind of ear-trouble and, though painful, it is not considered serious. Serious or not, it is very distressing to see a child suffer. I can never forget your face and your plaintive cry when you had your tonsils removed at Juhu when you were five years old.

Your second letter mentions that your temperature is also down. This is the first indication I have had that it was up. I hope this was due to some passing and minor trouble. It is clear anyway that both you and Rajiva have to go away for the hot weather. Kashmir will put you two right.

There seems to be quite a lot of talk about our transfer to other jails though no official intimation has come yet. The papers contain all manner of contradictory reports and Naini, Bareilly and Dehra Dun are mentioned so far as I am concerned. Having some considerable experience of U.P. jails I am not likely to be sent to a jail which has not been previously haunted by my presence and thoughts. So wherever I may be sent I shall soon fit into our accustomed groove. And yet there is always some trouble and jail people have a way of making themselves disagreeable over little things. You mention the trouble you have had at Naini about some things sent there for Rafi—Naini and the larger prisons are usually more disagreeable in such matters. Still I would continue sending books &c. to Rafi. Let the jail people refuse them if they want to do so.

My transfer will make no difference to interviews, that is to say I shall continue not to take them. I think I have already written to you about this. So the transfer, if and when it comes, should make no difference to your programme. All that you will have to do will be to address your letters to me differently. Even about that I do not know what the proper address then will be—direct to the jail or through the Provincial Govt. You can find out after you learn of our transfer.

I am afraid, therefore, that I cannot agree to an interview with Bijju *chachi*, here or elsewhere. There is no point in her writing to Govt. about it. As for her writing a letter to me that is a matter for the Govt. to decide. I propose to make no requests. Perhaps she had better wait till our transfer and then find out.

I have not received so far a fresh batch of books from the C.P. people. It may come later and add to my luggage. A few out of the books they send are good, most are mediocre, and some are no good and are just propaganda sheets or pamphlets. As for their weekly *The*

People's War I am certainly not going to make any request to Govt. Normally I do not do so and more particularly I have no intention of singling this out as an exception.

I have sent you a parcel containing the following books & pamphlets:

- | | | | |
|-------------------|---|--|--------------|
| 1 Davies | : | <i>Mission to Moscow</i> | |
| 2 Anderson | : | <i>Borderline Russia</i> | Belonging to |
| 3 Jinarajadasa | : | <i>Economics & Theosophy</i>
(pamphlet) | J. arajadasa |
| 4 <i>Bushido</i> | : | | |
| 5 Aronson | : | <i>Rabindranath through Western Eyes</i> | |
| 6 Vakil | : | <i>To Europa</i> | |
| 7 H. Kabir | : | <i>Mahatma & other Poems</i> | |
| 8 Gertrude Murray | : | <i>Verdict on Beverley Nichols</i> | |
| 9-10 Agarwal | : | <i>Gandhian Plan of Economic Development for India—2 Parts</i> | |

11 *Kadambari*

12 *Finland Unmasked*

13 *Vishva-Bharati* &c Krishnamurti

I have still with me one of Jinarajadasa's books—*The Great O'Neill*⁶²²—I have finished with it but some others are looking through it. I shall return it later and then you can send it back to Jinarajadasa.

I have received an account of Frank's (Edward Thompson's son's) death in Bulgaria. As you must have met Frank, and the story is a moving one and must interest you, I am giving it to you here. The original account is from an eyewitness of the incident.

Frank had a very exceptional gift for languages. He knew the European classics (Greek & Latin) well and a large number of modern European languages. He was 18 or so when the war started. He joined up and served later in Libya, the Sicilian landing &c. Apparently he added to his stock of languages during these war years and learnt or improved his knowledge of Persian, Arabic, Russian, Polish, Czech, modern Greek, Serbo-Croatian and Bulgarian. A very remarkable achievement for a boy who died at the age of 23. He was also, I understand, a poet of some distinction. He was attached to an important intelligence unit of G.H.Q. Cairo and held a very responsible post in it. But he felt ashamed of the easy life of headquarters in Cairo and was deeply stirred by the courage and sufferings of the Yugoslav patriots. So he volunteered for the dangerous work of assisting Bulgarian partisans

622. *The Great O'Neill* by Sean O'Faolain. This is a study of Hugh O'Neill, second Earl of Tyrone (1550-1616), and his times.

and in January 1944 was parachuted into Yugoslavia. His work there was very good and much appreciated. In March his colleague was surprised and killed but Frank just escaped and wandered about for 10 days in the forests and hills. He joined another unit and then, although he had a safer alternative, deliberately courted danger by marching off with a band of Bulgarian patriots. He felt that not to go with them would be unfair and would lead them to think that he was afraid of sharing their risks. There were running battles and he just escaped being killed—a dictionary stopped a bullet. He refused to leave his wounded wireless operator. They were nearly starving when they were rushed and captured on May 31. They were not allowed to sleep & were repeatedly interrogated. He claimed that as a liaison officer, captured in uniform with all his papers in order, he & his colleague were protected by the laws of war. He refused to give away his wireless code or military secrets.

On June 10 he was sent to Litikovo, a village some 30 miles from Sofia, where 13 of them were tried—five officers (Frank, one American, a Serb and 2 Bulgarians) and 8 others. 57 partisans had already been shot out of hand. Frank sat in the village public hall where the trial was taking place, smoking his pipe. The hall was packed, and it is said that the intention of the authorities was to rouse the crowd to a fury, to lynch them, so that it could be claimed afterwards that their deaths were the result of a spontaneous outburst of public indignation. But the people were on their side. When summoned, Frank, to everyone's amazement, spoke in fluent and correct Bulgarian. He was asked why he, an Englishman, fought against them & entered their country. He replied: "To me this war is something far deeper than a struggle of nation against nation. The biggest thing today is the fight of Fascism against anti-Fascism." "Do you not know that we shoot men who hold those opinions?" "I am ready to die for freedom and I am proud to die with Bulgarian patriots." The crowd burst into weeping and an old woman flung herself forward: "I am only an old woman, it does not matter what you do to me. But you are all wrong. We are not on your side, we are with these brave men." She was struck down to the ground. The judges hastened the trial and finished it in 20 minutes. Major Thompson took command, led his comrades to the place where they had to stand and raised his hand in the clenched-fist salute of the Fatherland Front. It was struck down, but he called to the people: "I give you the Salute of Liberty." At the castle all of them, as they died, died lifting this salute, with the spectators weeping.

Frank, it is said, has already become a Bulgarian national hero. The story of the Thirteen Partisans of Litikovo has become part of Bulga-

rian legend and history and above all the courage of the young English officers' leader (Frank) is admired there. Later, in November, the Bulgarian Govt. gave the partisans of Litikovo a great ceremonious funeral; there were 50000 spectators as the coffins were carried shoulder-high. Bulgaria is raising a memorial over their common grave.

That is the story as it has reached me. It is sad that young men of such promise should be snuffed out almost in boyhood. But heroism for the sake of an ideal is always inspiring and a splendid death surely is better than a long life, without purpose and meaning.

Your visit to Kashmir will mean considerable additional expenses. Draw on my account at Bachhraj's for them.

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 105.

10.3.45⁶²³

Darling Betty,

The air is thick with rumours of our transfer and everyday the papers are full of some new story as to where we are going to be sent. Probably all these stories have little basis, and yet it does seem that some time or other we shall be sent away from here and I shall find myself in another jail — Naini or Lucknow or Bareilly or Dehra Dun or some other prison in the U.P. I shall return to some old haunt of mine for I have a varied acquaintance with the U.P. jails. It really does not matter where I am sent. So far we have received no official intimation and so we continue our old routine more or less and see no reason to change it till definite news of the transfer is conveyed to us. The mind adjusts itself of course to the coming change. It is a long time since we came here and had our horizon limited by the walls that surround us — just 31 months yesterday. New walls do not make much difference, for walls are much the same everywhere.

623. File No. 3590/H/II-2: Maharashtra Government Records, Police Commissioner's Office.

The transfer, when it comes, will not mean that I shall start taking interviews. I do not propose to do so. Letters, of course, will have to be sent to a different address — whether to the jail direct or through the Provincial Government concerned, I do not know. You will be able to find out.

I had asked you not to send me any honey. But soon after I received 4 large bottles of it. Of course they were welcome and we are consuming them.

Summer has very definitely established itself here. When do you propose to go to Kashmir? I suppose this depends on the children's holidays. Indu writes to me that she would precede you to Lahore, from where you will go together to Srinagar.

Love to you and Raja.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

March 15, 1945 Wednesday

Today is the beginning of new *Samvat* year 2002 according to the lunar reckoning. Our *Nauroz* will come later.

Our afternoon talks continue and yet there is no indication of our transfer, though there are frequent references to it in the papers. So from day to day we wait for some kind of formal information. Probably we shall be sent away in separate groups, or individuals, on different days, to each province concerned.

Meanwhile, we have our discussions and I think most of us have appreciated them and profited by them, though Maulana hinted yesterday that we might wind them up as his personal work was suffering. So far we have had 12 days of these talks—today will be the 13th. We have considered the communal question and the future of the Congress. We shall now go on to the constructive & economic programme, & then, if we have time, to the future national & international shape of things —

x

x

x

x

Raja Narendra Nath's⁶²⁴ death three days ago came hardly as a shock, in the normal sense, for he was over 81. Yet it was a break with the

624. (1864-1945); Hindu Mahasabha leader of Punjab and father of Rameshwari Nehru.

past and therefore painful. He was a lovable man, perfectly straight and honourable and rather childlike in some ways — In these days these qualities are precious enough.

x x x x

My blood pressure taken today — systolic 120; diastolic 78 — difference (pulse pressure) — 42, which is healthy.

March 16. Friday

At our afternoon sitting yesterday Maulana spoke for nearly an hour and a half. He dealt with the developments in 1942 after the Cripps affair — Gandhiji's articles & the situation in the country then — culminating in the A.I.C.C. meeting. He praised Bapu for his wise leadership and his many great qualities but on this occasion, he said, Bapu had erred and we should recognise it. As for himself, he had felt this way even then and argued at length. Eventually he had agreed because he could not keep away from a step of this kind once taken — Still he felt now that he should have resisted Bapu's argument still more. Then he referred to subsequent happenings in the country — the position today and future possibilities.

Then he dealt with the communal situation — how he had been pained at the C.R. formula⁶²⁵ fathered by Gandhiji and how, in his opinion, this had done great harm. For the future, he was clear that we should not approach Jinnah or the Muslim League in any way (unless the League itself changed completely).

Maulana's analysis was clear and clothed in brilliant but rather over-rich language — How keen his mind is. I agreed with nearly everything he said and yet not entirely. He has not quite finished yet and will continue today.

x x x x

625. The Rajagopalachari formula contained six points: (1) the Muslim League to endorse the demand for Indian independence and cooperate with the Congress in forming an interim government; (2) at the end of the war, a commission to mark out the boundaries of areas where a plebiscite of all the inhabitants will decide the issue of separation from Hindustan; (3) all parties will be free to organise propaganda before the plebiscite; (4) questions of defence and joint services will be decided by mutual agreement; (5) all transfers of population must be voluntary; and (6) these terms will depend on Britain passing over full responsibility to the Government of India.

Yesterday I sent a note⁶²⁶ to Sendak about Pantji. I am annoyed & troubled at the delay in his operation and the general casualness shown in regard to it. Today I have written to the Secretary, Home Dept., Bombay Govt., on this subject. In this letter I have referred to another matter also. An A.P. message from Ahmadnagar appeared in the newspapers some days ago, saying on 'reliable' authority that we had all sent a representation to the Govt. expressing our reluctance at the proposed transfer to other jails. Further that Kripalani and Pattabhi were in favour of the transfer but had submitted to the majority view. Of course we had sent no such communication, though Maulana had once mentioned to Sendak that he was not keen on the transfer & would prefer to remain here.

Obviously Sendak is at least partly responsible for this message of the A.P. The odd thing is that no contradiction has appeared.

March 17, 1945

Darling Indu,

I have your letter No. 99 of March 4th. I can well understand your difficulty in deciding where to address your letters to me. There are so many rumours about our transfer and every day some new story crops up in the newspapers.⁶²⁷ Yet here we are still in Ahmadnagar Fort. The local correspondent of the Associated Press is responsible for some of these stories and there are the newspapermen in New Delhi and elsewhere who pick up scraps of news and conversations and then give vent to their imaginations. It is an interesting game though it must confuse many people. The latest story is that aeroplanes are kept ready for our transfer and we shall be carried through the air in a day or two. This appeared in yesterday's papers. Also that we are all ready and packed. The fact of the matter is that we know nothing definite and no information has been supplied to us. All we know is from the newspapers. I have given no thought to my packing. Why should I till I know definitely? It is rather absurd for me to pack up and upset my day's routine and then wait from day to day for something to happen. Packing really consists of putting my numerous books in boxes. So, in

626. Not available.

627. A news report of 15 March 1945 stated that "all bag and baggage of the Working Committee members, who are detained, has been packed for despatch. It is likely that all the members will be transferred to their respective provinces within a day or two by aeroplanes."

spite of some inevitable mental disturbance, we carry on as before — And I think you had better do so also till you have clear information about a change in our place of habitation.

I wrote to you that I was asking *Puphi* to bring for me, on her return from America, a Parker '51' pen. Somehow I managed to forget writing about this to her. So if and when you are writing to her you might mention this. Also I want her to get for me a Schick Colonel dry electric shaver. I am not sure if she can get either of these in wartime. The style of nib I use is more or less medium fine — that is rather a poor description and individual tastes vary greatly. But that is all I can say about it.

According to the lunar way of reckoning the new *Samvat* year — 2002 — started with the new moon two days ago. Our *Nauroz* usually comes a fortnight or so later. But I am not sure this time as this year an extra month is added for purposes of adjustment to fit in with the solar year. If you know the date for *Nauroz* let me know.

I am glad you have news of Yunus looking well. But I do not approve of his newly acquired beard. I suppose he will be coming out very soon and then the beard will go.

For many months past I have not been receiving any English periodicals — *New Statesman*, *Time & Tide*, *Tribune* etc. I wonder if this means that my subscription has expired. The American periodicals come in more or less regularly — Sometimes with a slip attached that the subscription has expired. I wrote to Chand two or three months ago asking her to get Walsh to renew these subscriptions.

Love to you and Rajiva and Feroze.

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 106.

March 19. Monday

There has been a burst-up at our afternoon talks and, as might be expected, I have become involved in it. It is doubtful if these talks will continue. Yesterday was our 16th day of these discussions.

On Friday afternoon Maulana continued and spoke for another hour and a half. He was not so good as on the day before. He spoke too

much like a schoolmaster — or is it the *maulvi's* way? Too much of speaking down to others, or repetition, as if he was addressing a public meeting. A conscious attempt at self-justification and an overemphasis when a hint might have sufficed. All this with a wealth of imagery and wordplay which were rather fascinating in their own way. Much of what he said was perfectly true, and yet he left on me an impression of slight discontent. There had been an element of advocacy in what he said & not so much the calm discrimination of a judge.

As Maulana had dealt at some length on Thursday & Friday with events in 1942, especially from April to August, and explained his own attitude to them, I felt that I should give an explanation of my reactions then. Although in many respects these reactions had been similar to those of the Maulana, yet there was a basic difference, just as there is a fundamental difference in our respective approaches to life and even to political problems. After all, he and I are the products of different worlds and have grown up in wholly different mental climates, at any rate, in our earlier years. Yet we often agree on political & other matters, though possibly we arrive at our results by different routes. He relies on the intellectual process almost completely and has a brilliant intellect, but that process itself is inevitably governed by his early training, environment & experiences. I suppose I am also intellectual, and yet there are vague but powerful urges in me which push me to other regions. I react to the crowd & the mass more, much more, than the Maulana. I am more receptive in this way. And so while the crowd influences me, I influence the crowd also, though I keep apart from it. Maulana remains aloof, rather disdainful, preferring to keep away from the crowd. Partly this is due to a certain shyness & sensitiveness, but partly at least to intellectual arrogance. Pride and self-respect are perhaps more powerful motives in him than in most others, though all of us have them in differing degrees. But long training in the courtesy of the old school keeps him in check and only occasionally a trace of disdain peeps out from his words.

Well, I decided to say something about past events and began my account on Friday — I had only a few minutes then & continued on Saturday.

In the course of my talk I referred to the W.C. & A.I.C.C. meetings in April-May 1942 in Allahabad. I said how much upset I had been by the draft of the resolution sent by Bapu through Miraben. I had considered it wrong and injurious. There was a serious conflict of opinion, long discussions and a threatened break-up of our Committee — However, I said looking towards the Maulana : आपने नाजाएँ दबाव

डाला और मामला कुछ संभाल लिया! ⁶²⁸ Maulana interrupted and said :
⁶²⁹ یہ نہ کرتا تو کیا کرتا and then I proceeded with my narrative.

Obviously I had used the word *नाजाएज़* in a friendly, semi-humorous way, meaning that he had exercised rather too much pressure. I would not have used that word seriously for fear of offending him. Maulana took it in the same spirit but he misunderstood my reference. I was thinking of his repeated appeals to those who wanted Bapu's resolution as it was and who would not countenance any change in it. He thought that I had referred to his pressure on me when I suggested then that I should resign from the W.C. and was reluctant to speak on the resolution (as it emerged from the W.C.) before the A.I.C.C. However, even this difference in interpretation had no importance and neither Maulana nor I attached importance to the incident. I was trying to explain as calmly and objectively as possible the effect on my mind of various incidents, so that I could understand myself and show to others the changes I underwent in the course of those months preceding August 1942.

After I had finished that narrative, I added that though Bapu's approach during those months (as seen in his articles in *Harijan* &c.) was, to my thinking, wrong and confusing, I have no doubt that he was representing the mind of thinking and unthinking India then. This general thought & unconscious reaction was given a direction by his articles and this fact created a new situation full of dynamic possibilities. Indeed the push having been given, no one (except to some extent Bapu himself, and even for him it was difficult) could check it or direct it effectively. In fact I looked upon the scene as the development of powerful elemental forces which were proceeding by their own momentum, as it were, to some inevitable end. Later Bapu himself varied his attitude and approach though holding fast and passionately to the main line of action. In fact this variation of his brought him much nearer my own viewpoint and removed some of the obstacles in my path. Some, not all, for the final difficulty of large-scale action just then remained, with all its far-reaching consequences. When, however, I saw that this was inevitable, that Bapu's mind was fixed and determined, then further argument was not useful. I had to make my choice. There was no difficulty about that choice. It was inconceivable to me to remain aloof from such a movement. Facts as well as all the urges of my own nature were too strong for me. Having so decided, then it followed that whatever action was to be taken must be whole-hearted.

628. By exerting undue pressure you salvaged the situation a little.

629. What else could I have done?

Looking back, I said, I am not very sorry for what I did or for what happened. I do think it could have been done better if the approach had been different, if, in fact, our approach of August had been consistently followed in previous months. But facts are seldom in our control and things took their own course. And in this course, though much harm resulted, much good also is visible. It is difficult to find a just balance — Only the future would show. So much had happened and was happening in the world that was full of sorrow and tragedy that we could not complain or feel dispirited at our own experiences. So I was not worried at all about the past.

After I had finished, Vallabhbhai spoke. His tone was full of suppressed anger, pain and bitterness. He said that he had long suspected that Maulana and others had felt the way they had spoken about events prior to August 1942. Because of this he (or 'they' meaning those who thought with him) had avoided speaking on this subject during these last 2½ years. Now unfortunately the initiative had been taken by Maulana. He wanted to avoid an argument but he wished to say with all emphasis that he did not agree with Maulana's analysis and he was firmly convinced that the attitude and steps taken by Bapu had been correct and inevitable. Any other course would have meant the gradual annihilation of the Congress with all its evil effects on the country.

In particular, he said, he had resented what I had said about the events in Allahabad (W.C. meeting April 1942). (Kripalani interrupted: It is not what Jawaharlal said but what Maulana had interjected that was objectionable.) So Vallabhbhai went on referring to the 'two parties' in the Congress ('which 2 parties', I said, 'to which party do I belong — so far as I know I form a party of one'.) There had always been trouble between them. He resented this attempt to show that he and his colleagues had not only been wrong but also that what they proposed then was dangerous for the country. They had put up with much they did not like, they had swallowed many a bitter pill, and now to be referred to and run down in this way was most objectionable. Further, he added, that because of references to guerilla warfare in a speech⁶³⁰ in Assam in April 1942, he had sent his resignation from the W.C. to the Maulana.⁶³¹

I was amazed at this outburst — both at the words used and the bitter tone that accompanied them. I had not intended to, nor, to my knowledge, had I used any language that might hurt. I was thinking,

630. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 12, pp. 262-263.

631. It was said that Vallabhbhai Patel, Rajendra Prasad, Kripalani and Prafulla Ghose wrote to the Congress President offering to resign because for them nonviolence was a creed and even more important than Indian independence.

all the time I was speaking, in terms of self-analysis and trying to give an objective account of happenings. Obviously there had been a conflict of views, as there often is. It was all past now, done with, and a part of history. Why should we get excited over it? My reference to the Allahabad W.C. had been of the briefest and Maulana's interjection very casual, natural, and totally harmless. Yet these inoffensive remarks had upset Vallabhbhai and Kripalani and uncovered some deep feeling of resentment. This glimpse into the depths was very disturbing. I had hoped that all this was over.

I was a little annoyed and yet not much so. It all seemed due to some misunderstanding which could be removed. That could be done, but what about this glimpse into the depths of suspicions and bitterness?

Maulana said he would say a few words the next day (for time was nearly up) to remove misunderstandings.

The next day (that is, yesterday Sunday) Maulana expressed briefly that neither he nor I had said anything meant to hurt and there evidently had been a misunderstanding. He was indeed very sorry that anything he had said should hurt. He explained his interjection which, in fact, referred to me and not to others. Maulana spoke in a very friendly and reasonable way.

Then I spoke — I had previously thought over the matter and realizing its dangerous potentialities had firmly resolved to be brief and sweetly reasonable — to go out of my way to soothe. But things happened differently. In spite of Maulana's explanation and mine and our assurance, the response was wholly lacking, and the bitter tone and some kind of charges and justifications continued. This attitude amazed me still further for, whatever the previous misunderstanding, surely there was no room for further argument after our explanations. Questions and answers became more heated — these were between Vallabhbhai and Kripalani on the one hand and Maulana and me on the other. Maulana kept cool. Not I or Vallabhbhai or Kripalani.

Ultimately I said that it was direct insult to me that my explanation (and Maulana's) should not be accepted in the spirit it was given. Also if every word uttered was liable to be misunderstood and distorted, then it was exceedingly difficult to discuss any subject, and the only course left open to me was to avoid talk with such persons.

Thus the meeting broke up, and I am at present hardly on speaking terms with Vallabhbhai and Kripalani! I suppose this will pass, but the whole background of bitterness and suspicion will not pass so easily.

Our afternoon talks seem to have been effectively ended by this incident. Even if they continue for a day or two, they will be constrained and unreal.

I think I was less wrong than usual in this affair—yet why can I not keep my temper?

x

x

x

x

Last night I shouted again in my sleep—my usual agonized cry. Pattabhi, who sleeps some distance away in the verandah, got out of bed and came to wake me. Was my shouting a result of the disturbed nervous state due to yesterday's incident?

March 20 — Tuesday

Last evening I told Vallabhbhai & Kripalani that I felt sorry for my having lost my temper the day before and I apologised for it. I felt better afterwards.

x

x

x

x

A letter from Nan from New York dt. 8/2. Quite casually she mentions that she proposes to tour in the U.S.A. in March, April, May and then in October, November, December! Which means a much longer stay there than anyone had anticipated.

x

x

x

x

I seem to be losing weight again slowly. Today my weight was just under 126 lbs.

March 21. Wednesday

Yesterday afternoon we met again for our talks and discussed some aspects of the minority problem. The 19th had been a gap day.

Today we are not meeting for this purpose as both Vallabhbhai and Narendra Deva have caught chill & have some temperature.

March 22. Thursday

Last night I shouted in my sleep again and disturbed others. Where will this land me one day — or night?

Vallabhbhai & Narendra Deva are still unwell, though better. There has been almost a kind of epidemic of mild influenza. Sendak, the jailer, several warders have had it.

March 24, 1945

Indu darling,

So here we are still! And yet the talk of our transfer continues and every other day brings a fresh rumour or surmise. The wheels of Government move very very slowly.

I have your letter — No. 100 — of the 14th March. I am sorry to learn that both you and Rajiva have been unwell. I suppose it is inevitable that Rajiva should suffer occasionally from infantile complaints. And then this changing season brings distempers and derangements in its train. Here quite a number of people have had colds or mild attacks of influenza. I have thus far escaped them.

I see from the papers that after a brief cool spell the temperature in Allahabad has shot up to 103°F. That means an early hot weather and by April probably neither the babe nor you will approve of the weather. When do you intend going to Lahore on your way to Kashmir? As I have already written to you, you should not vary your programme in any way because of rumours of my transfer. That should make no difference.

It is rather silly of you to go on worrying about money matters. Waste should of course always be avoided, more particularly in these days. But otherwise one should carry on one's life without thinking too much of money. It is true that a stage arrives when money scarcity comes in the way of one's normal life. That stage has not come to us yet, so why bother? When the time comes it is not difficult to adapt oneself to changing circumstances, or at any rate it should not be difficult to do so. It is far more a question of the mind than of external circumstances. Worrying about the future in terms of capital invested is foolish and, what is more, is not in keeping with the changing world. Our real capital is not money or goods but our capacity and ability and our mental outlook which can always adjust itself. No one can take these

away. Even from the narrower point of view of material goods and conveniences, we have little to worry for we have the ability to add to them whenever necessary. For my part, the idea of hoarded capital is none too pleasant. It is almost a burden and a nuisance.

Certainly, it should not be necessary for any of us to have to go to a hill station to escape the hot weather. The old Indian idea was that the dry hot weather cleansed our system by making us perspire thoroughly. I think there is something in that, provided we can stand it. But it does reduce our working capacity and enervates, and if we can recharge our internal batteries by a change we should certainly do so. The idea of going up to a hill station regularly is more or less recent, and yet the idea of going to the mountains in summer is a very old one in India. Naturally this was not easy when communications were scarce and limited. And yet it is surprising how many people went as pilgrims or in some other guise. They did not settle down anywhere and preferred wandering, which was probably a much more delightful way of spending the summer in the hills. The cost of such trips then or even now need not be considerable, unless we deliberately follow expensive or wasteful ways. You know how it is possible — or rather was possible in the pre-war days — to go about Europe without spending too much. And yet many tourists, partly from ignorance, partly from a desire to show off, spent a lot. An enjoyable trip anywhere has less to do with money than most people imagine. True, standards and ways of enjoyment differ and, in any event, a certain minimum amount is essential. Babies also make a difference for they are helpless and require especial care — It is folly to take risks with them which ultimately involve us not only in additional trouble but in extra expense.

So please do not be so foolish as to worry yourself about money matters. I have told you to draw upon my account at Bachhraj's and surely I have not got to repeat this on every new occasion.

I am sending you today a bunch of books — They are :

- 1 Shaw: *Everybody's Political What's What*
- 2 de Madariaga: *The Heart of Jade*
- 3 Agnes Smedley: *Battle Hymn of China*
- 4 Wavell: *Allenby in Egypt*
- 5 Wasilewska: *The Rainbow*
- 6 Sarat Chatterji: *The Deliverance*
- 7 *All Parties Conference Report — 1928*
and a number of the *Adelphi*

There are several good books in this lot which will interest you. Madariaga, which you had sent me, takes one to the Aztec civilization of Yucatan in Mexico at the time of the Spanish conquest. Yucatan

and the Incas of Peru have always rather fascinated me and I liked to read this book.

The *All Parties Report*⁶³² is *Dadu's* personal copy with his markings and I value it. Please see that it is not lost in a crowd of books.

I have received a bundle of books and pamphlets — 23 in all — sent by the C.P. people. They took a long time in coming as they were dispatched in January.

When you go to Kashmir, to whom am I to send the books I return? I had better send them to Anand Bhawan but who is to be the addressee? Also let me know your addresses in Lahore and Srinagar for letters.

Last week, I think, I wrote to you and suggested your asking *Puphi* to get for me a Parker '51' pen & a Schick dry electric shaver. I have written to her myself about these so you need not write —

Two weeks back I wrote to you about *Bijju chachi*. A few days later came the news of her father, Raja Narendra Nath's death. A cutting off of old bonds, to which we have long been used, always comes as a shock and I was grieved. *Bijju chachi* must have felt his death deeply. And yet it was as good a death as anyone has a right to expect. He was over 80 and he died suddenly as he was playing cards with his grandchildren. In recent years I saw a little of him — the last time was in the summer of 1942 when I visited his house — Were you not with me then? I remember when I first saw him in 1902 or thereabouts — we had all gone in an old-style *बरात*⁶³³ all the way from Allahabad to Gujarat in the north Punjab for *Bijju chacha's* wedding. Raja Saheb, or Dewan Saheb as we used to call him then, had one very delightful quality — he was and continued to be right to the end singularly child-like in spite of his years. This rare quality makes one lovable. When you go to Lahore, you should call on the old Rani Sahiba.

Are you so different from others of your age? Perhaps so, indeed probably so, for we are shaped by our own particular environments and experiences. Similarity comes from common experiences shared, especially in the early formative years. Brothers and sisters may be very different from one another and yet they often have a common fund to draw upon, a private world of their own which they alone share, almost private codes when a mere hint brings up a certain picture. Family life has some such background. So also school and college life — People drift apart in later years and almost forget one another and yet

632. Also known as the Nehru Report, it asked for full Dominion Status and suggested ways of achieving a political settlement between the Muslims and the Hindus.

633. *Barat* — A marriage procession.

when they meet, immediately a bit of the old world of experiences shared comes back and binds them. Your generation has been an unsettled generation all over the world. Your own family has been an unsettled family ever since your birth. Your personal experiences have been far more individual than communal — whether the group is the family, the school or any other. You had no brother or sister — You have had no experience whatever of a joint Hindu household and probably the idea itself seems odd to you. Indeed you have had little experience of any normal family life. So it is not surprising that you should feel occasionally rather isolated from others and without those invisible and intimate bonds which unite. You are not at all unique in this experience for many have undergone it in your generation. This development of the individuality has its good points, but it also definitely has its drawbacks for it produces a sense of isolation. After all we have to live in this world and mix with human beings, such as they are, and it is always a great advantage to know how to mix and how to spot the good and the agreeable in others. Otherwise we dry up. The so-called social life of Allahabad is, I agree with you, rather dead. Even so we can always find oases of friendly feeling and sometimes of common adventure. And then we are not limited to Allahabad, our home is the whole of India. It is desirable therefore to develop the extrovert sides of our nature both from the point of view of our individual selves and the work we do. For those who are already sufficiently extrovert, the introvert aspect becomes important. We have to find a right balance or we grow lop-sided.

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 107.

March 25. Sunday

News of our impending transfer has trickled through — thus far informally. Mahtab's escort is coming tomorrow and he will be expected to leave the day after. Others will presumably follow in the course of the week.

Today we complete 959 days in Ahmadnagar Fort — 137 weeks — 2 years, 7 months, 17 days.

25-3-45

Darling Betty,

I have received your letter of the 9th March. Perhaps it was not such a bad thing for Harsha and Ajit to have a mild attack of chicken-pox. This is supposed to be an insurance against the possibility of future attacks. I suppose they had been previously vaccinated. I am myself not a very ardent believer in the virtues of vaccination but submit to it because I know no other surer method. Since coming here I have been vaccinated afresh and have also had an inoculation for plague.

I am very glad to learn that Harsha and Ajit are flourishing at Gwalior School and developing self-assurance and the spirit of cooperation. Harsha's growth and his capacity for leadership are especially satisfying for he was particularly nervous and sensitive. This shows how much better it is for children to grow up with others of their age in the healthy and cooperative atmosphere of a good school rather than be confined to their homes.

It would be good for Raja if he accompanied Kasturbhai⁶³⁴ to the U.S. as his secretary. I am glad he is keeping fit. Kasturbhai was to have gone very soon, sometime this month. So the decision will have to be taken within a few days.

I think I wrote to you that the four large bottles of honey reached me safely. I suspected at the time that Psyche must have sent them for the honey was of the excellent Mahabaleshwar variety which she has previously sent. We have all enjoyed it greatly. Please thank Psyche and give her my love.

There has been so much talk in the papers and elsewhere about our impending transfers to other jails that I have become rather fed up with it, yet it seems that at last something of the kind is going to happen in the near future. Some of us have been formally told that we should be ready to leave within the next few days. Where we are being sent to of course remains a state secret and a deep mystery. You will know that soon enough. I do not mention any further details about the dates of our respective departures as the censor will not approve of it. It really does not matter, for by the time you get this letter, or very soon after, you will get to know of them.

I see from the papers that Allahabad has suddenly become hot. The temperature goes up to 103°F. This is rather early. Indu had written to me that as soon as it became hot she would go to Lahore and stay

634. Kasturbhai Lalbhai.

there till you joined her for Kashmir. The rapid change in the weather may induce her to go earlier than she intended. Her programme should in no way be affected by my transfer.

I have just received a large bundle of khadi pieces sent by Mridula. This contains 6 *thans*, 6 towels, and 3 bedsheets. Obviously they are not meant for me only, for I cannot possibly require all these. There was some indication in the message conveyed to me that they were meant for others also. Anyway we shall divide them up.

This is likely to be my last letter to you from Ahmadnagar Fort. Today we complete 960 days here — a long chunk out of one's life. But the longest lane has a turning somewhere and so we turn to another prison!

Love to Raja and you.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

March 26, Monday

Arrangements for our transfer and dispersal ripen. Kripalani was told yesterday that he would have to go on the 27th, all by himself! This, taken with an item of news in the papers that he is being sent to Karachi, has amazed him and us. Why Sind & Karachi for him? There is no explanation.

This morning Pantji, Narendra Deva & I have been told that we are likely to be sent on the 28th — day after tomorrow. Apparently we go together to some U.P. jail.

March 27, Tuesday

Kripalani left today with a Sind police escort. It is definite that he is being taken to Karachi prison. Why this far-away place it is impossible to guess. Kripalani himself was amazed and it struck him as a huge joke. Mahtab is hanging on here still and his date of departure is not certain yet. No news at all about Maulana, Asaf & Pattabhi. As for Vallabhbhai & Shanker Rao they are to go to Yeravda but instructions are that they should be sent away last of all. And so they too

hang on indefinitely. A few days this way or that make no difference but this uncertainty is irritating.

Anyway Pant, Narendra Deva & I go tomorrow evening from here about 7.30 p.m. (outside time 8.30 p.m.) Where to? It appears that N.D. and I are being sent to Bareilly Central Prison and Pant — of all places—to Naini Central Prison! When we first heard that Pant was likely to be sent to Naini none of us believed it and Pant himself thought there must be some mistake. Naini Tal must have been meant and not Naini. Yet we are told there is no mistake. Naini or Allahabad is the last place for Pantji. He is going for an operation & Allahabad, & least of all Naini prison, has no facilities, perhaps, indeed probably, he is going to be released. Even so why Naini? This news has rather upset him.

If he goes to Naini & N.D. & I go to Bareilly we shall have to part company at Itarsi in the middle of the night. What a knack this Govt. has to make even simple operations complicated. Separate escorts, separate reservations &c.

Well, anyhow, we shall know definitely soon enough.

I wish I was being sent to Naini — Not that I like the place but I would like to meet Rafi again after 2½ years. And Lal Bahadur & many other old colleagues are there also.

x x x x

It appears that a large crowd gathered at the station this afternoon to see Kripalani off. The policeman in charge of his escort did not behave too well. Tomorrow? Probably there will be a crowd again for us. I hope there is no incident which leads to my losing my temper! Yet, in spite of my resolve to keep cool, I fear that I will lose my temper if anything untoward happens. A long period of confinement is not a good preparation for keeping cool and collected — at any rate till we get used to a changed environment.

x x x x

I wrote to Betty yesterday and to Indu today — my last letters from Ahmadnagar Fort. My letter to Indu was my 108th letter to her from here.

x x x x

My weight today 126 lbs. It was 143 when I came here (or was it 142?) So I have dropped 17 pounds. Maulana's weight has come down from 172 to 127—a drop of 45 lbs.

Narendra Deva has been unwell. He is just recovering. During the last week he lost 5 lbs.

x

x

x

x

And now for a little walk in the moonlight before I go to bed. The moon is almost at the full—Tomorrow is full moon. My last night here! I came with the new moon and go away with the moon at its fullest. We have seen 33 new moons here—and old ones.

March 27, 1945

Darling Indu,

After five or six weeks or more of deep and intensive thought, careful staff work, and complicated arrangements, it does at last appear that we are going to be sent away from Ahmadnagar Fort to other and various prisons. If the dispersal of ten persons from one place involves so much time, labour and expenditure of mental and physical energy, I have wondered how much trouble is involved in the movement of armies and arrangements for their food and quartering—logistics as all this is called. If you add to this the opposition of enemy forces which has to be met and overcome, the problem, tackled in this leisurely way at least, becomes prodigiously difficult. No wonder that wars drag on and on.

All this preamble means that we have for the first time received definite information about our impending transfer. Or rather, the information is not very definite for our destination is still supposed to be a major state secret. But that we are going away soon somewhere, somehow, may be taken now for granted. Because of this fact I am writing to you today, Tuesday, which is unusual for me for I have almost always written to you on Saturdays ever since I came to Ahmadnagar Fort.

I cannot tell you much about my movements or destination—But you will no doubt find out about them soon enough, probably before you get this letter. Yet I felt like writing to you today and sending you what is likely to be my last letter from Ahmadnagar Fort. It is my 108th letter to you from here, thus representing over two years of weekly correspondence.

Though we go from here to yet another prison, and life will be much the same for us though in different environments, still it means a big break for us. For 961 days today, two years seven months and eighteen days, we have existed here like some plant or vegetable rooted to the ground. And now we are going to be uprooted, transferred and transplanted in some other barren and stony soil. But there and elsewhere later in life, the memory of these years spent in Ahmadnagar Fort will endure and colour our vision. The days have passed and the months and the years, but each day, each moment, has left its impress, and layer upon layer of these impressions and experiences lie embedded in the recesses of our minds.

It will be a change to go out and see the trees and broad fields and human beings moving about as we travel across India. Everything changes and yet everything continues to be much the same as it was. The change is really within us, each one of us, and the world and nature continue ever young, though generations of living beings are born, grow up and fade away. Yes, it will be a change to go out because we shall see everything with different eyes. And when others see us what changes will they find in us? We cannot say or even know.

Some time, when I have the chance, I should like to see high mountains, snow-covered, with rivers of ice flowing down their sides, and wide spaces and deep ravines. So I would try to adjust my mind and vision to distance and depth again, and breathe the invigorating air that comes from those snowtops. Too long I have lived and moved in a narrow quadrangle and looked at its cheerless and hard walls. Only the sky offered distance and depth and mystery.

Enough of this. You will of course make the necessary adjustments consequent on my transfer. Letters and periodicals to be sent to a new address — (I am sending you today a packet of periodicals — *Life*, *Time*, *Asia*, *Commonsense* &c.) I have been receiving here, addressed to me, two daily papers — *The Hindu* of Madras and the *Allahabad Patrika*. Please ask Upadhyaya to inform them both of my new address.

I have still with me one of Jinarajadasa's books — *The Great O'Neill* by Sean O'Faolain. I am having this returned to him direct to the Theosophical Society, Adyar, Madras. I hope you have returned his other two which I sent you. Inform him that I have sent the *O'Neill* direct to him.

Some time back I asked you to try to get for me a Persian dictionary through Kitabistan. I wonder if this is available. Anyway please ask Upadhyaya to get for me from Ramnarain Lal, bookseller of Katra, Allahabad, his *Students' Practical Hindustani-English Dictionary*. The

10th edition came out in 1940. There should be no difficulty in getting this. Tell Upadhyaya to send it on to me to my new jail address wherever that might be.

Yesterday I received a huge parcel of khadi stuff sent by Mridula—She chose rather an odd time to add to our luggage—There were six full *thans*, three bedsheets, six towels. Obviously they were not meant just for me and I have succeeded in distributing the lot except for 2 *thans* which are still with me. They are good khadi and are bound to come in useful, though I do not require them at present. In these days of cloth scarcity in most parts of India, it seems rather selfish for me to hang on to them. Will you thank Mridu?

I follow the temperature of Allahabad in the weather reports in the papers. It grows warmer with unusual rapidity. You had better fix up your departure for the north and escape before the full heat descends upon you and the little one.

Love

Your loving
Papu

March 28, Wednesday

Last night was bad—restless, disturbed—and I shouted in my sleep. Pattabhi came over & woke me after Pant had failed to do so by his coughs which were meant to attract my attention.

x

x

x

x

March 28 (*night*)—Railway train—On way to Bareilly—

So we are out of Ahmadnagar Fort at last and going north across India.

The day was spent in packing and moving restlessly about from one room to another. Yet there was not much to talk about or the mind was not in the mood to talk. We carried out our usual routine and in the afternoon I almost forced myself to sleep a little for I had had a bad night and the next one was also likely to be disturbed. It was a brief restless sleep full of dreams and vague fancies as I lay half awake and half asleep.

I insisted on playing our usual game of badminton in the evening—our last one in A.F.—had a bath and an early dinner—and at 7.25 p.m. (8.25 outside time) we left the fort which we had entered so long ago

on August 9th 1942. We left behind in the fort the Maulana, Vallabh-bhai, Pattabhi, Asaf, Shanker Rao and Mahtab. The place had already begun to look deserted and those who were left behind were eager to go away. Mahtab will go tomorrow. The others will take another week or more.

We entrained at Vilad about 9 miles from Ahmadnagar—a tiny village station. On the way Pantji's car got lost, or rather we lost trace of it, and Sendak became very nervous as is his habit.

The motor journey was in the dark though the full moon was out. We could just see the rather bare Mahratta landscape. The station was cool and very quiet and the vague outlines of the trees were pleasant to see.

Our train came and then it was no longer quiet for many people had come from Ahmadnagar and they raised slogans and *jais*.

x x x x

We have been given a tourist saloon very comfortable with meal arrangements &c. Curious how it is our fate to travel in such luxury only as prisoners! My mind went back to that other journey fifteen years ago when father & Mahmud & I travelled from Naini to Yeravda.

The staff & the police escort are courteous and accommodating.

x x x x

Pantji had been much upset at the prospect of being sent to Naini. This meant normally that we would part company from him at Itarsi. But we soon discovered that all of us were going *via* Allahabad. This was surprising enough. More was to follow. We learnt that Pantji was also going to Bareilly! The old order had been countermanded. In fact all of us were at first intended for Naini. Then the U.P. Govt. changed its mind! As we were leaving A.F. we were served with fresh orders from the Govt. of Bombay. N.D. & I were told in these that we were going to Bareilly Central Prison; Pant that he was to go to Naini—Now we are told that Pantji will get a fresh order at Allahabad tomorrow night! Very confusing and odd all this, but we are happy that Pantji will be with us. He is pleased too.

To go to Bareilly from Ahmadnagar via Allahabad is an extraordinary route. This is due to old orders being countermanded at the last moment and the railway arrangements could not be changed. However I am glad. It will be good to see Allahabad even from a railway train in the dark—to see perhaps some old friends also. May be—I have a vague hope—even Indu & the babe if they get to know of it.

There are crowds at the station and joyful faces and slogans. How good it is to see them. Even a little of this has roused my spirits. I love to look at the boys and girls. This is likely to continue throughout the night and the next day, and possibly the day after. It will be tiring but also exhilarating. It is midnight now. In another 45 minutes we shall be at Manmad where there is sure to be a big crowd.

1945 Ahmadnagar Fort to Bareilly Central Prison

March 28—Pantji, Narendra Deva & I leave the Fort in the evening—Motor to Vilad 10 miles away & entrain there.

29th Reach Naini at about 10 p.m. Taken to the Central Prison—my old barrack—the कुत्ता घर⁶³⁵

30th In Naini C.P.—meet Pafi, Lal Bahadur and others. Indu sends some food at midday. I return some articles. Talks in the afternoon with old colleagues—Sadiq⁶³⁶ and others tell us of happenings outside in the fateful months after August 9, 1942. Among others met Varma⁶³⁷ of the Lahore Conspiracy Case who was in Lucknow Dist. Jail in 1941 when I was there. He has completed 17 years in prison! His hair has turned grey.

Badminton in the evening.

Leave Naini C.P. at 9.30 p.m.

At the gate, or rather outside, a brief meeting with Indu and Feroze.

We are motored to Phaphamow—Indu & Feroze following in their car.

At Phaphamow met Purushottam Das Tandon, Narmada Prasad, Muzaffar Husain and some others.

When the Allahabad train came, Upadhyaya and some others appeared.

We leave Phaphamow at about 11 p.m.

March 31st—

En route some groups to see us at various stations—most vociferous crowd at Shahjahanpur. Reach Tisva at about 3.30 p.m. & taken off the train—Motored 17 miles or so—to Bareilly Central Prison.

635. Kennel.

636. Sadiq Ali.

637. Shiva Varma.

Long argument between Pantji & Coxhill the D.M. about former's release. The U.P. Govt.'s order confusingly drafted & Coxhill made a mess of it. Pantji very angry. In his own quiet way crushed the wits out of Coxhill and made him feel a nervous wreck—At last Pant was discharged at about 6.30 p.m. and we were marched to our barrack, where Rafi had lived for a long time. Only we two here.

April 3, 1945

Darling Indu.

We are settling down—gradually. The process is slow, requiring not only physical arrangements but mental adjustments. After two years and nearly eight months of Ahmदनगर Fort changes followed rapidly. The mere coming out of the Fort was an event for us, though it was dark and we could not see much. It was the night of the full moon. We had reached Ahmदनगर on August 9th 1942 just when the new moon was beginning its brief life of light and growth, and it was appropriate in a way that our stay there should end with the full moon, though many a moon had waxed and waned in between—was the number of these thirty-three or thirty-four?

It was exciting to have movement by car and train, to see crowds and hear them shout, to watch the morning steal over the fields, recently harvested, to remember the stations as they came one after another. And then Naini, on the threshold of Allahabad, and the old prison I knew so well. The meeting with old friends there with all the excitement that this involved.

And when I came out of the Naini Prison gate, to see you and Feroze standing by—and you looking just as you looked three years ago, a dainty and lovely slip of a girl, apparently unchanged by the passage of years or by motherhood. More friends at Phaphamow, and another journey by train. Again distant horizons and the familiar Oudh landscape. And so to a little station near Bareilly where we were taken off the train and motored (part of the road was villainous) to Bareilly C.P. There we bade goodbye to Pantji. And so here we are.

We are settling down slowly. Conditions here are different for this is a proper, or rather regular, jail with all that this means. And there are swarms of flies and mosquitoes and above all dust. Even as I write the paper I write on gets covered with a layer of dust. But we get used to these minor inconveniences soon enough. It will take a little longer to adjust oneself emotionally, for the three days of our journey from

Ahmadnagar to Bareilly were very full of experiences to which we had become so unused.

It was good to see you even for a brief while. I feel refreshed and vitalized by this outing and the sight of friends' faces and the sound of their voices.

From Naini I sent you one or two odd articles. Arriving here I discovered many more unnecessary things with me and so, rather hurriedly, I sent a suitcase, my box charkha, and a small packing case to Upadhyaya. These contain some odd books, clothes, warm coverings &c. Also an ivory Nataraja which Betty had sent me and which I hope will reach you intact. There are also two boxes full of small stones picked up in our yard at Ahmadnagar Fort. Some of these are rather attractive, though they are valueless, and I was wondering if you could not have a few set properly in the form of a brooch. That would be a souvenir of my stay in Ahmadnagar!

I have still far too many things with me and I have little or no use for them here. Indeed they are a bit of a nuisance for there is no proper place to keep them. In Ahmadnagar there were cupboards and chests of drawers &c. and there was little dust. Here things have to be kept in boxes and even of these I have not enough. So I am thinking of sending you, in the course of a few days, a packing case containing old clothes, books & various oddments. I suppose this can be easily sent as a railway parcel. The clothes I might return are of little use to me here or elsewhere, they are worn out and can be given away.

I am told that, as at Ahmadnagar, I can write two letters a week and receive four. So there need be no change in regard to this. I shall write to you once a week. Letters to me have to be addressed to Bareilly Central Prison.

I do not like the idea of your delaying your departure for Kashmir and waiting for developments. This living in a state of uncertainty is unpleasant. Personally I do not think that anything is going to happen soon enough to upset your programme. I suggest that now you should provisionally fix up your programme so as to meet Betty in Lahore when she gets there. That will be about the 26th, if I remember rightly.

Love to you and to babe.

Your loving
Papu

Bareilly Central Prison—Izatnagar

April 4—

After 2 years & 8 months suddenly a crowd of sensations and impressions. The railway journey, the distant vistas, crowds & shouting, arrival at Naini, meeting Rafi & others—

To meet these vital young men full of beans was a joy. To learn from some of them of what occurred in August-Sept.-Oct. 1942 was to revise our previous impressions and to realize how much bigger the movement was than what we had imagined it to be.

Rafi looked fairly well, though thinner. I was glad to find him so, for I was afraid he might have deteriorated physically much more.

And then as I came out of the Naini Gate there was Indu clad in a *shalwar* & ओढ़नी⁶³⁸ standing some distance away! Vaguely I had hoped to see her at the station but I refused to allow myself to expect it lest the disappointment be great. I went to her—was with her for a few seconds—and then had to enter the police car.

I saw her again at Phaphamow for some minutes—There were others also—Tandon &c. And then the rail journey.

I could not sleep for a long time for I was too excited after all these extraordinary happenings.

x x x x

The reaction to all this has been slowly creeping upon me here in Bareilly C.P. Or partly it is due to the environment of a regular prison and the high walls that surround our yard. It is frightfully dull here and I have been unable to do any real work. Even physically I feel poor. The arrangements for food &c. are primitive.

April 7, 1945

Darling Indu,

I have received your letter of March 31st—No. 101. You just completed the century while I was in Ahmadnagar Fort. This is my letter No. 110 to you.

638. *Orhani*—A long scarf worn over the *kurta* by women.

Did I look thin and shrunken when you saw me? You and others who see me after a long interval are better judges than I can be. Changes creep in slowly and are hardly noticeable from day to day, and we get used to them. In the aggregate they must amount to a good deal. To be thin is not always a disadvantage. It may even be a change for the better, as I think it is, within limits, in my case. But to present a shrunken appearance is not advantageous as age is not by itself a welcome factor. Yet both have to be accepted. I do think, however, that I am pretty fit and healthy. But neither I nor anyone else can write off 2½ years at a time of life when physically at least one must be on the decline. As for milk &c., which you suggest, I have been taking some regularly for many months. Not too much for I am not used to it.

I had not allowed myself to hope that I would see you on my passage through Allahabad, though somewhere at the back of my mind there was that expectation. It is better not to expect too much from life and take it as it comes. About Rajiva I had definitely not expected to see him, so it was no disappointment. In view of the uncertainty of our meeting and the late hour, when he must have been asleep, it was not worthwhile carting him about from place to place and upsetting him. Of course I would have loved to see him. And yet I am not sure that I would have been glad to have my first glimpse of him when he was upset and possibly grumpy. Anyway all that is over now and I hope that I shall see him some time or other in a more suitable environment and in the bright light of day. That will be much better than a prison gate at night.

About Kashmir, you will fix up your programme as you think best. After all you are in a better position to judge than I am. What I do not like is for anyone to hang on to rumour and uncertainty, and it seems to me there is far too much of this rumour business and wishful thinking.

Yes, I would like to go to Kashmir more especially if you are there—to go there as soon as I can, even if I can only stay there for a few days. The combination of you and Kashmir will be just the right tonic for me. I do not think it will make much difference to anything or anybody if I am away for ten days or a fortnight. Yet life is so much like an octopus and its tentacles grip and hold me to activities which may have little essential importance. I sometimes wonder how much of what we do has much basic importance!

I see from the papers that Padma is getting married in about three weeks' time. I should like you to send her some kind of a gift on my behalf. If you have difficulty in fixing this up, send a cheque for

Rs. 250/-. This should be sent to her direct and not to her parents. Also you will convey to her and her parents my love and good wishes.

Some time back I asked you to get Rs. 500/- transferred from my account with Bachhraj to my account at the Punjab National Bank, Allahabad branch. I wonder if you had this done. If not please take the necessary steps now. While at Ahmadnagar Fort I used to issue cheques on Bachhraj to the Bombay Govt. for cash. That was convenient there, but it will no longer be convenient here. The Punjab National Bank is more suitable here. So I want some money there to draw upon whenever needed.

I have been receiving various newspapers here—All those that I wanted, except *The Leader*. I had not mentioned *The Leader* to you previously as I expected to be able to get it here. Curiously enough a copy of it came here by post addressed to me but then it stopped. You might therefore ask the *Leader* people to send their paper to me—It will keep me informed of local happenings.

You will send your letters direct, addressed to me. The proper address of this jail appears to be: Central Prison, Izatnagar, O. & T. Ry., Bareilly. At least I hope this is correct. The O. & T. Railway rather intrigued me. What was this new name? I have found out now that it stands for Oudh and Tirhut Ry. and it includes the old R.K. Ry. and the B.N.W. Ry. I shall have so much to learn, so much to get used to. I suppose Prayag is still in E.I. Ry.

In the course of next week I hope to send you a packing case containing some books and old clothes and new, which I do not need here.

Will you send me a copy of the pamphlet containing the marriage service which we had prepared at the time of your wedding? There used to be a bundle of these in my dressing room. I want to give it to Narendra Deva.

And that reminds me. My last day in Ahmadnagar Fort was March 28th. I remembered that it was the anniversary of your wedding—the third—was I right about the date?—Three years.

Love to you and Rajiva & Feroze.

Your loving
Papu

I was sorry to learn that Radhe⁶³⁹ was suffering from typhoid. I like him very much and am rather anxious about him. I hope he is getting better.

639. Radhey Shyam Pathak, a Congress leader of Allahabad.

April 13, 1945 Baisakhi Day

Darling Indu,

Two of your letters, which you had sent to Bombay, have been forwarded to me here. They are dated March 20th/23rd and 26th.

I am glad to know that Rajiva's first tooth is out and that he is keeping well. His efforts to talk are most interesting and they must fascinate you. Does he not sit up yet? Surely it is time he did so. It is an extraordinary thing, as old as humanity and yet ever new, how a child develops his consciousness of the outer world. There is all the sense of unending adventure, of continuous inquiry, of a peering into new phenomena, and everything is new, as it must have been for those remote ancestors of ours who came into being at the dawn of human existence. Rapidly, so very rapidly, the child passes through millennia of human history, and subconsciously, or partly even consciously, lives through the history of the race. If we grown-ups could only retain in some measure that spirit of adventure and inquiry and delight at ever-renewed discovery that is a child's heritage, and add to it the knowledge and wisdom that the ages have accumulated for us, how excellent it would be! But unhappily we grow too soon out of that wonder of childhood and yet do not reach mature manhood with all its compensations. Somehow we manage to miss both, and though we grow in years we remain babes and sucklings in mind but without the vitality and the spirit of growth of the child.

Please thank Dr. Krishnan⁶⁴⁰ for the books he has sent you — They were originally required for the Maulana but to send them to him now is out of the question. Nor would I like you to send them all here — they are too many and I do not want to burden myself unnecessarily. I am not a fast reader. If I think a book is worthwhile, I like to take my time over it. The following books out of the list, however, are likely to interest me:

- 1 Ogden : *The A.B.C. of Psychology*
- 2 Van den Bergh : *The Universe in Space and Time*
- 3 Darrow : *The Renaissance of Physics*
- 4 C.T. Chase : *The Frontiers of Science*
- 5 *Science in Progress*
- 6 Thompson : *Growth and Form*

If you like, you can send me these, or two or three of them.

640. K. S. Krishnan (1898-1961); Fellow of the Royal Society; Professor of Physics, Allahabad University, 1942-47; Director, National Physical Laboratory, 1947-61.

I remember W.M. Benton very well. He paid a visit to me in Anand Bhawan some years ago. He first introduced me to *Time* which he arranged to send me for a year or two. He was at the time the head of a big advertising firm in America and was probably also connected with *Time*. It is odd how these business people suddenly develop into heads of universities in America. Probably he looks after the business side of the university — and this is a very big job there.

It is good of him to send me *Fortune & Foreign Affairs* — the latter I have been getting already through Walsh, but that does not matter — As for *Fortune*, do you or Feroze not get it? It was included in the list I sent Walsh. Please write to Benton to thank him and tell him I have pleasant recollections of him. It produces a warm feeling in me to know how friends remember me — As for his inquiry — what he can do for me 'to assist me in lessening the ardours of confinement' — that thought itself and the goodwill that prompted it goes a long way to help. For after all this is largely a matter of psychology, a question of the mind and its reactions, of waves of thought, important always and everywhere but more so in confinement. If he will occasionally send me a new book which he thinks might interest me — I have fairly extensive interests — this will be welcome to me not merely for the book's sake but more so for his sake, and will make me think of him and of America. Write to Frances also and send her my love.

No, I have not read Beverley Nichols's book — nor am I particularly anxious to do so.

I have sent you a railway parcel containing clothes and books. This has been booked to Prayag — Probably you will have received the railway receipt for it. If not, inquire at Prayag station. The clothes sent are some old and tattered ones, some new or more or less new. Give away the old ones. You will find in the lot 3 coloured shirts which Betty sent me — These are quite new and unusual. I did not require them and I prefer white ones, in prison especially. A full list of clothes, books &c. has been placed inside the box at the top. A number of old foreign periodicals have also been returned in this box. You can deal with them by sending them on to others, as previously.

Now that I have sent you in this parcel and through Upadhyaya quite a number of articles which I had accumulated, I feel lighter. How things accumulate even in prison! Even now I have far too many clothes and books about me. But I like to be prepared for all contingencies and for the moment I have enough to carry me on through the summer and the rainy season. Of course when winter comes — and it is cold here — I shall require some warm things. But that is still far off and much may happen in between.

It would be a help to me if you could manage to get a suitable cigarette-holder for me. The one you sent has gone to pieces. I have got used to smoking denicotinised cigarettes, that is, making the smoke pass through a pad of cotton wool. This is good for the throat also. Smoking a cigarette by itself gives me a sore throat. So a 'suitable' holder is one which permits the introduction of some cotton wool in the tube somewhere between the mouthpiece and cigarette end. It need not be of any particular kind or especially made for the purpose. Some ordinary holders have some space in between which can be used in this way. Ask Feroze to keep an eye open for this kind of a holder and if he finds it anywhere, to snap it up. If such a thing is not available, then the matter ends there.

Has Upadhyaya returned or is he still with Pantji?

Love

Your loving
Papu

April 14. Saturday

We have been two weeks here and still I feel restless and unsettled. Partly because the new living conditions are not to my liking, partly I suppose it was inevitable that the uprooting from Ahmadnagar Fort and transplanting here should shake up the system. I have wondered how I would have fared if I had had to stay in these surroundings ever since my arrest in August 1942 — as indeed most of my friends and colleagues have done. I would have got used to them but the feeling of oppression would have been greater.

I have had a short-lived but severe attack of indigestion. I do not remember having anything like it for many years. I got over it by fasting.

A possible reason for restlessness & uncertainty is the continuous talk about our impending release. The papers are full of it and even an approximate date has been mentioned — April 20th. I think all this is greatly exaggerated and is somewhat premature. Yet I believe that our release cannot long be delayed. There are all manner of factors working in its favour. I would put it at early in May. That, incidentally, would mean our just completing 1000 days of internment this time!

These rumours of our release have upset Indu's programme for going to Kashmir. She is hanging on in Allahabad as long as she can.

Maulana is still in Ahmadnagar Fort! And so are Vallabhbhai and Shanker Rao, much to their annoyance. There appears to have been some hitch about Maulana's transfer to Bengal, though why I cannot imagine for Bengal is a Sec. 93 Province⁶⁴¹ now completely under the Governor Casey.⁶⁴² Maulana, I suppose, does not mind. Possibly he even prefers remaining on in Ahmadnagar, though it is annoying to live in a state of uncertainty. But Vallabhbhai must dislike this state of affairs exceedingly for he was really keen on a transfer. The Fort must be rather a lonely place since most of us were sent away. Vallabhbhai & Shanker Rao have to remain there simply because of the Maulana. They have to keep him company. Otherwise Yeravda awaits them.

This delay in Maulana's transfer also leads me to think that the possibility of a near release has something to do with it.

x

x

x

x

Last evening the Deputy Superintendent informed us that President Roosevelt was dead — so the radio had announced. This news came as a great shock. Somehow no one expected him to pass away so soon. We get used to people as part of the scheme of things — and so with Roosevelt. He was only 68 or thereabout — not much of an age.

I was greatly upset and at night I was restless and dreamed of him. I had long wanted to meet him. My mind was full of the far-reaching consequences of his death — in the U.S. as well as in the world. It would make a big difference. But what would this difference be?

Somehow I felt old. I am getting on in years. Roosevelt was only 13 or 14 years older than me. So the old generation passes and no one knows what the new will do.

April 19, Thursday

Maulana has at last left Ahmadnagar Fort for Calcutta, and presumably Vallabhbhai & Shanker Rao have gone to Yeravda.

641. Section 93 of the Act of 1935 enabled the Governor of a Province, if he was "satisfied that a situation has arisen in which the Government of the Province cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of the Act", to assume, with the concurrence of the Governor-General, all the powers of the Provincial Government. It came into force in Bengal on 31 March 1945.

642. R G. later baron Casey (1890-1976); Australian politician; Governor of Bengal, 1944-46; Minister for External Affairs, 1951-60 and Governor General of Australia, 1965-69.

The newspapers deluded me also with their constant announcements about our impending release. I ought to have been more sensible. I suppose release will come before very long but I do not expect it till June or later. Probably not for another 2 months. I am glad Indu has decided not to wait and is going to Lahore and Kashmir in a day or two.

April 19, 1945

Darling Indu,

I have your letter of April 8th. This was your No. 104 — I am continuing the old numbering. This letter of mine is No. 112.

I am glad you have decided to go soon to Lahore and Kashmir — There was no point in your delaying your departure. Perhaps by the time this letter reaches Allahabad you will have already left. I might have sent this to Lahore to catch you there but on second thoughts I have decided to address it to Anand Bhawan. That appears to be the safest address and it will I hope be forwarded to you wherever you might be. Please let me know your future address for letters — or addresses on given dates, so that I can send my letters to the proper place. I hope you have arranged to have the foreign periodicals sent on to me here regularly. Also where am I to return them and to whose address? That applies to books also. Shall I send these from time to time to Feroze — Anand Bhawan, or Upadhyaya?

I wrote to you from Ahmadnagar Fort and asked you to arrange to send me Ram Narain Lal's Hindustani-English dictionary. I should like to have this and Upadhyaya ought to be able to get it easily — There are two other books, or one book in two volumes (I am not sure) which is somewhere in the library. This is Romain Rolland's book on Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. If it is not found in the library, ask Upadhyaya to get it for me. The Indian edition has been published by the Ramakrishna Centre near Almora — the Advaita Ashram in Mayavati.

Talking about books, I am rather keen on reading Aldous Huxley's and Somerset Maugham's new novels — Huxley's *Time Must have a Stop* and Maugham's *The Razor's Edge*.⁶⁴³ I wrote about them to you previously. Perhaps they are not easily available yet. It is just possible

643. It is the story of a young American, who had served as a pilot in the first World War and who found personal tranquillity in India.

that you might be able to get them in a Lahore bookshop. I am looking forward to a parcel of books which *Puphi* sent me from New York two or three months ago. But if letters take six weeks by air, parcels must take many months. I do not know where she has addressed it to me — perhaps care of the Bombay Govt.

The packing case I sent you was despatched over a week ago, by passenger train and should have reached you — Yes, steel trunks are useful in prison. I managed to get one in Ahmadnagar and I am trying to get another here. Books and papers have some protection inside them. You need not trouble to send a trunk to me.

I have had a small note from Kishan Bhai informing me of Padma's marriage — I am not writing to him myself as this would come in the way of my other letters. But you will have, I hope, sent the wedding present or cheque on my behalf to Padma with my love and good wishes.

That reminds me that something has to be done about Yunus's marriage which you say is coming off towards the end of this month. I really can't suggest what you should give him as a wedding gift. The choice nowadays is limited. You cannot send him a cheque as in Padma's case. That would not be appreciated. Try to get something in Lahore or later in Srinagar, although that will be after the event. You can spend anything up to Rs. 200/- or 250/- for it. And also of course you will convey to him and his bride my love.

I have not written to Amma (*Nani*) for over three months, and meanwhile, I have received two letters from her. You will apologise to her on my behalf and tell her I am well. After all that is about all I can write to her. I find it hard to fit in extra letters as my usual correspondents — you, *Puphi* and Betty and occasionally Chand or Tara — exhaust the number of letters allowed me. I have been writing fairly regularly, once a fortnight, to *Puphi* in America. As she is far away I felt she ought to have some news of us. But so far she has not received any of my letters. They take a mighty long time to get through the various hurdles on the way.

Soon you will be in Kashmir — What a delightful prospect for you and Rajiva. He ought to flourish there and imbibe not only health and strength but some of the fascinating and mysterious beauty of the place. I shall be with you often in mind and enjoy this charm and beauty through you, vicariously and yet intimately enough.

I am very sorry to learn that Shri Handoo is not well and has developed patches of leucoderma. This is peculiarly distressing and it is surprising that there is no cure for it.

Give my love to Nani, Chand, Rup and children in Lahore, and to other friends there.

It is still not too warm here and the nights are definitely cool.
Love

Your loving
Papu

19-4-1945

Darling Betty,

I have not written to you since I came here. It is just three weeks since we left Ahmadnagar Fort, and spending a day in Naini Prison *en route*, reached here. This uprooting and transplanting business, after having been fixtures for so long in Chand Bibi's old domain, has naturally an unsettling effect. But we gradually settle down again and throw out fresh roots and tendrils. Now we two here — Narendra Deva and I — have got used to our new routine in the new environment of a regular jail, which is not somewhat different from the military barracks of Ahmadnagar. We have developed the capacity to adapt ourselves and that is a useful accomplishment.

I am sending this letter to Bombay but I do not know if it will reach you there for you and Raja must be preparing for your journey north. By the time you reach Kashmir, May will be well advanced. May is a delightful month there, though I do wonder if April with the fresh breath of spring is not better. But April is certainly colder and probably you will prefer May and June. The boys will thoroughly enjoy themselves and I hope they have riding and swimming and a taste of mountain hiking. You must show them a glacier. That is always a red letter day in a child's mind, when he sees this river of ice. My first glacier was the Pindari in the Almora hills and I was about 9 when I visited it with the family. I have still vivid recollections of it.

I see that some of you, deluded by our wishful newspapers, have been expecting our early release. Do not do so. The release will come, early or late, when the time is ripe for it. To live in expectation of it, either for those inside prison or outside, is folly. Wherever we are we have to carry on our jobs, and when any change comes we accept it and adapt ourselves to it immediately. So, as I have said, we have learnt the art of adaptation, and that is one of the secrets of life.

I read in some paper that your book will soon be out both in England and America. That is good. I had a copy of your book with me when I was passing through Naini. Rafi wanted to read it and so I left it with him there.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

April 27, 1945

Darling Indu,

I have been wondering where you are likely to be now and where I should send my letters. Your last letter came two weeks ago and you mentioned in it that you intended going to Lahore on or about the 21st April. So I suppose you are there now. Betty wrote that she is going to be in Lahore on the 30th and 1st for Yunus's wedding. Presumably you will also stay on for this although you have not said so in your letters. So I am sending this letter to Lahore C/o Chand, where I suppose you are staying. Chand and family, from the address, live in a flat. Your party will probably rather crowd them up. Not you, for you take little room, but the babe and his companions spread out a lot.

As you travel north to Lahore and Kashmir, I manage to accompany you in my mind and visit these places and see old friends again. I wonder how they look like now and to what extent they have changed. Your journey becomes almost (it is an odd comparison!) like a silent film with one picture succeeding another. Have you any plans about the length of your stay in Kashmir? I suppose not and there is no need to plan far ahead at this stage. Betty apparently intends to return early in July when the boys' holidays end. July, though the rains have begun then, is not a healthy or comfortable month in Allahabad. So you might as well stay on in Kashmir, though Srinagar then is not too pleasant. Is Feroze going to visit Kashmir during your stay there?

You will give my love to Amma and Rup and Chand and tell them all about me—how well I am keeping &c. Chand's and Rup's children must have grown up—Where are they now?

I have had another letter from *Puphi* from America. She is evidently feeling more and more at home there and fitting into a life of continuous travelling about. Her stay is being prolonged for she has entered into a year's lecturing contract with a firm arranging these lecture tours. That has somewhat taken me aback for it means that she will

not be back for another year, or at any rate till early in 1946. In spite of all my past practice in public speaking, the prospect of such a contract and having to speak day after day for months rather terrifies me. I would soon get bored with the audiences, with myself and with what I went on saying and repeating, for repetition there was bound to be. Fortunately I have to put up with no such thing and do not propose to let myself in for it at any future time. I feel I have had enough of public speaking, though no doubt when I have the chance I shall shout again.

From the point of view of Chand, Tara and Rita it is good that *Puphi* is staying on longer. Chand will graduate soon and may get temporary jobs there in newspapers &c. Occasionally I get letters from her. They please me for they show how well she is shaping in mind and spirit. There is something rather fine about Chand. She is straight and frank, sensitive and yet not very self-conscious, determined and inquiring, naturally troubled by many things and events but always trying to find out and get on her feet. Her visit to and training in America have undoubtedly done her good and she ought to make something worthwhile of her life. It is inevitable that she and others in her position, with mixed and conflicting backgrounds, should have to face difficulties in the future. To some extent all of us have to in these days of change and transition. And yet perhaps the conflicting elements are greater between the Indian and American background. The two countries are in many ways as the poles apart. America and Soviet Russia, for all their many differences, are much nearer to one another in spirit. I am convinced that we in India have to develop to a great extent that spirit, not losing our own backgrounds of course. And so it is well that young people should go to America for training, though how they react to it is another matter. There is always that risk when one ventures out of harbour into the open seas. The risk has to be taken and must be taken for we have been anchored for too long and our minds have become clogged and fixed in grooves of thought. It is a continuous source of astonishment to me how mentally and spiritually our people have starved and isolated themselves—and none are so narrow and isolated as some of those who have changed superficially and imagine themselves to be very modern and in tune with the changing world.

The change will come in India—it is obviously coming. It will be rapid enough and yet gradual so far as large numbers of people are concerned. It is a struggle in the spirit and soul of India. Individuals who change more rapidly than their environment have a tendency to get stranded and cut off, and they must suffer for that. Yet they are very necessary.

I have been reading Swami Vivekananda's *Lectures and Letters*. Many of these letters are from America where he lived for over a year and toured about a lot. That was over 50 years ago and yet his letters have a good deal of topical interest. He was a remarkable and fascinating man with enormous energy and a fire and passion which drove him on and eventually consumed him when he was barely forty. He was born about the same time as *Dadu* and Gurudev, and yet he seems now as belonging to a distant past age. It was odd to discover that he had never spoken at a public meeting anywhere, either in Bengali or English, before he appeared at the Congress of Religions in Chicago in 1893. He was totally unknown then and more or less starving and shivering in his inadequate attire—the yellow *sanyasin's* robe. He spoke extempore and created a sensation. That sensation was a continuing one, wherever he went, and he came to be known in the U.S. as the 'Cyclonic Hindu'. Later he travelled over Europe and went as far as Constantinople & Cairo. Halide Edib, the well-known Turkish woman writer, once said that Vivekananda visited her school in Constantinople when she was a little girl. She had forgotten what he had said, but she remembered still how impressed she had been by his presence.

We have been having unusual rains here. That has cooled the air. This reminds me—Are you now liable to colds? I have long had that failing, and though it does not amount to much, it is certainly a nuisance. For the last four months—and that is a long period for me—I have been entirely free from them. There may be many reasons for this, but I have told myself that one of these is a new habit I have developed: to gargle every morning with warm water with a good pinch of common salt dissolved in it, also to sniff this up through each nostril. Rock salt—*काहीरी नमक*—is good for this purpose. It is clear and pure and can be ground into powder. It is also stronger than sea salt.

I find that, almost unthinkingly and unawares, I am often giving you grandmotherly advice—I suppose this habit comes from advancing years. After all I am a grandfather.

Love

Your loving
Papu

April 30, Monday

So the great European War is already past history after five years and eight months—an interminable period it has seemed. The end—I suppose it is the end though not officially confirmed yet—came suddenly and dramatically although many indications had pointed to it.

What stark horror Europe has passed through during these years—more especially Poland, Russia and Germany! 'Berlin dies in the ashes of desolation' is a headline today in the newspaper. In this heap of ashes lie the remains of Hitlerism & Nazism—the proud challenge for world dominion.

The story of the past 12 years in Europe since the rise of Hitler—the triumphant advance, the fiendish cruelty, the proud contempt for world opinion, the amazing growth in power, the persistent crushing out of all contrary opinion and especially the Jews, the Saar, Austria, Sudetenland, Munich, Prague & Czecho-Slovakia—the Polish Corridor—and then War! And what a war! Almost a hundred per cent triumph for some years and then complete defeat, extinctions and exterminations, what a story teeming with drama and horror and changing fortunes.

My mind goes back to these years and picture after picture come up before it. And then it stops at the final scene—the terrible present desolation of large parts of Germany. This is the end of all the pomp & glory and proud boasting. And yet Nazi Germany has died hard, very hard. It did not lack courage. Which other nation could have survived so long against the overwhelming odds and deepening horror of the past many months? Only Russia, I imagine.

What now?

May 1, 1945

Darling Indu,

I have received your letter of April 24th—No. 105—sent from Allahabad on the eve of your departure for Kashmir. Four days ago I wrote to you to Lahore. I wonder if this letter of mine managed to catch you there. You must be on your way to Srinagar, if you have not already reached there. I read in the papers of your misadventure at Delhi station. This kind of thing is very irritating and I imagine the journey must have been a trying one both for you and Rajiva. Well, I

hope you will soon recover from i. in Kashmir. From weather reports I find that Srinagar is still pretty cold.

I am returning the dividend warrant. Please send it to the Punjab National Bank, Allahabad, for credit to my account.

The books & magazines you have sent have not yet arrived. I suppose they will come in a day or two. Do not trouble yourself about the Persian dictionary—Anyway I do not want a Persian-Urdu one. Nor do I want the *Students' Hindi-English Dictionary*.

Romain Rolland's books on Ramakrishna & Vivekananda in the original French will be welcome. I would prefer them to a translation.

I am sending you a few foreign magazines which might interest you and Betty—*Time*, *Reader's Digest* &c. The others I shall return to Feroze in Allahabad.

So the European war is over or almost over. The end was long expected and yet it came with some dramatic suddenness. War is not over yet and will continue for yet a while in other parts of the world, and even in Europe real peace is still a long way off. Nevertheless a long and terribly bloody and horrible chapter closes. In the years to come we shall gradually think of it as past history, something over and done with, and the passions of the day will fade off to some extent. It is well that the war, or rather this part of it, is over. We have had a super-abundance of horror and cruelty and inhumanity and stark suffering which pass comprehension. Our minds and feelings get numbed and incapable of normal responses. For the present this feeling of horror and numbness remains. Except for China, many parts of Europe have experienced this extremity of war and destruction more than any part of the world, more even than China in several respects. What a shambles eastern and central Europe have become, a vast pit of destruction and ruin and ashes. From Stalingrad and the Caucasus in the east this trail of fire and death stretches right across Germany to Holland and Belgium. Of the great cities of continental Europe how many have been reduced to dust and rubble. Paris and Rome and Prague are still there, externally not greatly altered, and yet I wonder how far the spirit and soul of these cities is the same as before. It cannot be the same again, but it may recover some of the old atmosphere. But Warsaw and Kiev and Stalingrad and Budapest and Dresden and Leningrad and Berlin have ceased to be as they were, and they will have to rise again and anew from their ashes.

Five years and eight months! My mind goes back to the day in Chungking when I first learnt of the German invasion of Poland and the outbreak of the war in Europe. For all its horror, what an extraordinarily dramatic period this has been with its sudden ups and downs,

and uprooting of humanity, and strange turns of fortune! But to go back still further—the last twelve years since Hitler came to power—what astonishing changes and developments, what brilliant successes and down and out failures these have witnessed. To go back still further—the end of the last war and the tortured years that followed. So two dramas of history have been played before our eyes and the story goes on. The war has not actually ended in Europe, it appears, but it must end soon. It cannot go on. And then the war in the East. This may continue for some time to come, but that too will end. And then? Other kinds of conflicts, a piling up of problems and difficulties, realism and idealism, a search for a real peace that is so elusive and difficult to attain.

It is well that you are in Kashmir and can have some peace of mind and body in that enchanting country. Give my love to Birju *chacha* and others and remember me to Sheikh Saheb.

Love to you and the little one.

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 114.

May 5, Saturday

Today we complete 1000 days in prison—this time since August 9, 1942!

x

x

x

x

The war in Europe is still not formally over. It drags on in a way and yet it is in effect over. Germany is reduced to the uttermost depths—Hitler dead⁶⁴⁴—Mussolini shot & killed.⁶⁴⁵

In the East also Japan shrinking. Rangoon partly occupied by British & Americans. It seems unlikely that the Japanese war will last very long as at first imagined.

644. On 1 May 1945, the death of Hitler was announced by the German radio. On 7 May 1945, an unconditional surrender of all German armed forces was signed at General Eisenhower's headquarters at Rheims.

645. On 28 April 1945, Mussolini was executed by Italian partisans in Como town on the Swiss border.

Some days ago the I.G. (Shaikh) came to visit us. He asked me if I played badminton. Who was I to play with? So later on his return to Lucknow he telephoned to say that the other political detenues here A & B Class or some of them can come over to play badminton with me in our enclosure. Some of them have been coming over in the evenings by turns and it is good to see them again after a long while. Among those who have come are: Jiva Ram Palliwal,⁶⁴⁶ Ram Saran,⁶⁴⁷ Mahabir Tyagi, Damodar Swarup Seth,⁶⁴⁸ Rajendra Pal Singh,⁶⁴⁹ Lall Singh,⁶⁵⁰ Har Sahai & Puran Chand.⁶⁵¹

May 11, Friday

My weight today 120-121 pounds, nearer 120 lbs. On the 19th April it was 123-lbs. On the 22nd April it was 124. Thus I have lost 4 lbs since I came here 5½ weeks ago.

My last weight in Ahmadnagar was 126 lbs. Probably a difference between the two machines. The Supt. (Abdul Ghaffar) is rather worried over my loss in weight. Wants to feed me up—But how? I feel well.

May 11, 1945

Darling Indu,

I have your letter from Lahore—undated but probably written on May 3. It is your No. 106. I hope you have now settled down in Srinagar after all the long and troublesome journeys. Yes, travelling in India must be pretty bad in these days. These early experiences of Rajiva will not dispose him favourably to it, and at the back of his baby mind he will store up resentment against this moving about and being shaken up and out of his normal comfortable routine. Modern civilization

646. A freedom-fighter of Ferozabad in Agra district.

647. A political leader of Meerut district.

648. (1889-1960); one of the accused in the Banaras and Kakori Conspiracy cases; later a leading Congressman in U.P.

649. (b. 1907); a Congress worker of Meerut; imprisoned several times during the freedom struggle.

650. (b. 1891); a Congressman of Bulandshahr.

651. A political leader of Meerut district; imprisoned for five years in 1943.

aims at and has achieved comfort to an amazing degree. But when it breaks down, it becomes an ugly ramshackle affair, worse than the hard and simple ways that preceded it. Just as you see the astonishing difference between the uptodate houses of today and the slums of today. The mud hut surrounded by the fields, bad and uncomfortable as it is, is better than the city slum. So in travelling also, if we have the wherewithal and opportunity, in luxury airlines or air-conditioned coaches or, on the other hand, in tightly jammed 3rd class carriages where it is difficult to breathe or even move your little toe or finger. The stage-coach and the bullock cart are almost wholly extinct now for purposes of travelling—not quite in parts of India. They were bad enough in retrospect. Yet they were more comfortable than the present-day 3rd class in our Indian railways. Nobody wants to go back to the stage-coach or the bullock cart and anyway that is not possible. But it is pretty rotten to have to put up with something which is even worse and which, in addition, somehow lacks the human touch. It is nauseating to see 3rd class carriages packed with human flesh and blood, all individuality sinking almost in one pulsating and panting mass. Travelling conditions are after all a reflection of life in general in India and what applies to travelling applies in an equal degree to the way the masses live or rather exist.

It was this distaste of travelling in these conditions that had led me some months ago to write to you on the delights of trekking in the mountains. Our city dwellers, unused to this kind of thing, are frightened at the prospect of being far from a railway line or a motor road. Yet the disadvantages of trekking are far less, and the advantages in the mountains are obvious. Of course that does not apply to the plains and it is impossible to walk or ride or drive from Allahabad to Kashmir, unless one has the facilities which the Grand Moghal's imperial train provided in the old days.

So you are in Kashmir now. What does it look like at this season? What flowers are blooming, what fruits hang from the over-burdened branches? I suppose the peach blossoms are over now, so also the rhododendrons. The lotus must be still in bud or even in an earlier stage. It blossoms on the Dal Lake in July, if I remember rightly. Cherries will soon be out and apricots and apples and peaches. I am getting rather mixed up about their respective seasons—they vary somewhat in different parts of the country.

Where is Ramlall's house where you are staying? Is it in Cupkar or thereabouts—I suppose I have spelt this name wrongly. Somewhere between the city proper and the Chashme Shahi? I heard some time ago that the Chashme Shahi had been practically enclosed by the

Maharajah's private gardens and was hardly open to the public. That indeed would be a misfortune. Even in 1940 these private gardens had spread out to the Chashme Shahi building and had cut off a road leading from the lake to the other side. How extraordinary is this desire to wall up and isolate large tracts of nature for one's private pleasure and deprive others from sharing in the abundance provided, which grows no lesser by the sharing. And the Nishat and Shalimar *Baghs*—what do they look like now? Is the Dal Lake much the same as ever or have the fancy boulevards made much difference? What birds chirp and sing in the trees?

I think of all these scenes treasured in memory's chambers, but even more I visualize the higher valleys leading up to the snows and glaciers, with their ice-cold brooks gurgling and rushing down to the vale below where they join the Vitastha.

I suppose, in spite of difficulties in travelling, Kashmir attracts still crowds of visitors, chiefly from the Punjab. Many of our friends may be there now or might come up later. How is Siddhartha doing—Nikku's⁶⁵² son? He must be a grown up boy now.

I like going to Lahore, chiefly because there are so many old and young friends there. The city also is developing in a way the air of a great city, though this is still rather superficial. The mixture of old historical tradition and modernity is rather appealing in its contrasts, though they clash frequently enough. Probably what I like is a certain vitality about the place. It is like a growing child, very immature in many ways and yet with an air of sophistication. But of course grown up people, that is grown up in years, who are still very ungrown up and immature in mental outlook, are not always attractive. They may become very tiresome. Gaiety is always to be welcomed. In Lahore however there is an atmosphere of a fake and superficial gaiety which is not so welcome. Yet for all that I like Lahore. Do you know that some of my earliest years, that is before I was ten, were spent in Lahore? Dol Amma was in a sense a Punjabi. She was born there and till her marriage lived there. Often she used to go on long visits to her mother, brother and others, and of course I accompanied her.

What has happened to the lovely pony which was presented to you by a friend—I forget his name—in Lahore in 1942 summer?

I am glad you consulted Dr. Bharucha about baby. I do not know much about such matters—deficiency of calcium &c. Why should there be this deficiency? Can it be made good pretty soon with right feeding etc.? It denotes a certain weakness of the bodily structure and we do

652. Kanwarlal Katju.

not want Rajiva to be weak in any way. He will be 9 months old soon and I suppose he is taking some other food now besides milk, though milk is the best stuff for providing calcium. Have you had his खीरचढ़ाई? And did you ever have a formal name-giving ceremony? How does his weight compare with a normal 9-month-old? The main thing is that he should keep generally healthy & cheerful and he will himself supply any deficiencies.

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 115. Should I go on sending letters C/o the Postmaster or to your proper address?

P

May 13, Sunday

Day before yesterday (May 11th) Narendra Deva & I received notices from the Govt. of India & the Bombay Govt. The latter has given up charge or responsibility for us. We are now, formally, the prisoners of the Govt. of India—Some promotion!

May 17, 1945

Darling Indu,

Yesterday I got your letter of the 9th May from Srinagar—your No. 107. You do not tell me what the motor journey was like. Are the so-called super buses comfortable? And how did Rajiva fare during the journey?

Kashmir continues of course much the same as it used to be. Nobody, and not even gross mismanagement on man's part, can take away the beauty of the place. Yet how much more agreeable and desirable it could be made if the mass of human beings there were put on the road to betterment. Every year bigger crowds of visitors go there from other parts of India and this I think is to be welcomed. Many of them are decent people going in search of rest and health and beauty. Still I do not take kindly to the class that flourishes so well in these days—

the high dignitaries extravagantly paid without much reference to their brain capacity, the war contractors and profiteers, and the hordes of others of high and low degree who seem to sprout up in wartime like weeds in a badly kept garden and eat up the soil to the vast detriment of the more legitimate plants and flowers. It is this variety of people who are most in evidence, I suppose, at all the holiday resorts, and especially in Kashmir. That is why I prefer the quieter higher valleys where there is less flaunting of ill-gotten monies. Not that I do not like pleasant and intelligent society—I am no recluse—but the contrasts in India are so marked and painful.

There is no need for you to fix up your programme in Kashmir definitely or to decide on the length of your stay there. Enjoy your holiday and do not bind yourself down to anything. There is no particular point in your returning to the plains when the rains have started. That is not a healthy season. Now that you have gone so far, you might as well stay on there as long as possible. Your last visit in 1942 was, I am afraid, cut short chiefly because of me. This should not happen this time. Srinagar may not be an ideal place to stay in from July onwards. You can then pitch your tent elsewhere. There is no lack of places to choose from.

I am looking forward to Rajiva's new photographs. Even more so I am thinking of the time when he will begin to toddle.

As for colds, do try the salt water method. It is simple and probably more effective than most of the patent medicines. I read an article in an American magazine some time ago in which an eminent doctor who had specialized in studying the origin and treatment of colds said that very little was yet known about these common and widely prevalent ailments. He was dead against the various nostrums offered in the market; in fact he said that they were often harmful. Apart from rest and some dieting, he strongly recommended the saline gargle and sniffing. Normally, when you are well, this need be done only once a day. If, however, you have a cold, it should be done two or three times a day—a fairly strong solution of salt in tepid water. Salt water is good for the teeth also.

It is pretty warm here now, yet not so hot, I imagine, as at Allahabad. The nights are pleasant. It is not the heat I mind so much as the dust when the *loo* blows. Within a month the rains ought to commence—the *chhota barsat* to begin with. So there is not long to wait. It is surprising how rapidly the days and weeks go by. Only occasionally they stick.

What is Nikku doing now? Is he working in Watal's factory?

A few days ago I received a cigarette-holder from Bombay, sent by Rai Amarnath Agrawal.⁶⁵³ This is satisfactory.

Puphi seems to have been having a rather hectic time in San Francisco. Her stay there must be ending as she was going to Chand's graduation at Wellesley.

This is my letter No. 116.

Love

Your loving
Papu

May 21, Monday

Two days ago the Supt. (Abdul Ghaffar) came and told us that he had received a telephone message from the I.G. saying that in case we wanted to be transferred to a prison in a better climate he would arrange this. Also if we had a preference as to what jail we might be sent to. The fact that I had lost 4 lbs. in weight since coming to Bareilly and the heat was now increasing had evidently worried the authorities.

Narendra Deva and I told him that we would not like to make any suggestion on this matter. It was good of them to suggest a change but any proposal on our behalf was, in a sense, some kind of cooperation in our imprisonment—It almost became a put-up job. So formally we had no answer to give. But informally I told the Suptd. that in spite of the increasing heat we were keeping fairly well and there appeared to be no particular reason why we should be transferred. It was desirable to leave us alone. So far as I was concerned I was keeping fit and the heat did not affect me much except for a general lowering of vitality. Narendra Deva's condition was a more important consideration for we did not want to risk another attack of asthma. He had fortunately been free from any severe attack now for eight months, although he had some breathing difficulty in the mornings. He had kept well since we came to Bareilly and had put on weight. So it seemed unnecessary to make a change.

The Supt. asked me about possible places where we might be sent to. Dehra Dun and Almora were the only two likely jails in the U.P. Of

653. (b. 1904); businessman of Allahabad; member, U.P. Legislative Council, 1936-52, and Council of States, 1952-60.

these he was of opinion that Almora was definitely better from a climatic point of view.

I further told the Supt. that as the medical officer in charge he was in the best position to judge about the necessity for a transfer. If our condition deteriorated in the coming weeks, and I did not expect this to happen, then he could consider this question.

Yesterday he came to us again and told us that he had conveyed our answer to the I.G. For the present therefore, according to our wishes, we would remain here, but at any time this was thought desirable, we might be transferred. In case of transfer he asked me who I would like to accompany me (this apparently, apart from Narendra Deva)—some people to play games with me, for Narendra Deva cannot do so. I was asked to choose any either from the political detenus here or in other U.P. jails.

I told him I was wholly unable to pick and choose in this way. I knew that many of my colleagues in various prisons were keeping bad health and required a change. How could I pick out two or three of them? And then presumably I was supposed to pick out the healthier ones who could play badminton &c. and not those who really required a change. In any event I could not ask for a transfer of any other people without consulting them. It may or may not suit them. There the matter rested.

The Supt. is terribly anxious to add to our comfort &c. somehow. He is continually asking me what more he can do—add to our furniture &c. As if furniture makes much difference! He has now ordered *tatties* for our windows.

As a matter of fact I am keeping fairly well—as well as I could be expected to. There is nothing obviously wrong with me. It is true that the process of losing weight has been continuous during the last 2½ years and I have grown rather thin with various bones sticking out. I have reverted now to my weight in the early twenties or is it earlier still?

May 25, Friday

Changes in England—the break-up of the 'National Govt.'⁶⁵⁴—the coming general election &c. are likely to lead to some minor changes in

654. On 23 May 1945 the British coalition government resigned and Churchill formed a caretaker government. General elections were to be held on 8 July.

India—Wavell still in England⁶⁵⁵ but Amery ceases to be Secretary for India—for the moment at least, though he may come back in a day or two in Churchill's 'caretaker' Govt.

x

x

x

x

I took my measurements today—not very accurately in the absence of a tape measure. Compare with page 36 *ante*, dt. 17th Nov. 1944 & previous ones.

Weight (on 11/5) 120 lbs. Chest $31\frac{3}{4}$ — $34\frac{1}{2}$ — $36\frac{1}{4}$ Waist $26\frac{1}{2}$ — $29\frac{1}{2}$ Hips $34\frac{1}{2}$ Thigh at mark $17\frac{1}{2}$ —18 Calf $12\frac{1}{2}$ Upper arm—bent $11\frac{3}{4}$, straight $10\frac{1}{4}$ Forearm $9\frac{3}{4}$ Neck $13\frac{3}{4}$.

A slight thinning though not marked—possibly differences due to imperfect measurements.

May 25, 1945

Darling Indu,

The summer advances and brings with it the hot winds and sultry weather. But far at the back of those winds those sea-changes are taking place which precede the monsoon—water being sucked up into the clouds and then to be borne away across the seas to far lands which crack with the heat and pant and thirst. Have you ever crossed the Arabian Sea during or just before the monsoon? I do not think so. Twice I had this experience in the old days of the small p. & o. ships which tossed up and down and from side to side, as if one was sitting on an electric rocking-horse, and it was quite impossible to stand or sit or even lie down without a firm grasp on some immovable fixture. Most people on board collapsed and groaned in their misery but I survived this exhausting ordeal and kept well, and I loved to watch this rolling and pitching and to see the huge waves advance on our ship and shake it up, breaking all over the top-most decks.

So the seasons follow one another and after the bad comes the good and the better. 'O wind if winter comes, can spring be far behind?' But even if there is winter in one place, or hot summer, there is spring elsewhere and cool breezes blow. I do not mind the heat much here

655. In March 1945, Wavell had gone to England for consultation with the British Government on the Indian political issue.

anyway and I am continually surprised at my adaptability to it. Besides this fortunate circumstance which helps me to keep tolerably well, I am not wholly here all the time. For I am often with you, not only in mind but almost it seems to me as if it were a physical transference, and I experience the climate of the Kashmir valley and look out through your window in the attic at the snows and the green hills and lakes and the Vitastha winding slowly on its leisurely and restful journey before it enters the gorges again. So I live a double life, or why double only? For it is a succession of many different and overlapping lives in many places far away from each other.

I received the other day Romain Rolland's Vivekananda and Ramakrishna—two volumes in English. They were sent to me from Rani-khet. I suppose Upadhyaya had gone there and sent them.

Since I have come here to Bareilly Central Prison I have received some odd letters apart from my usual ones. The rules here permit correspondence with others besides the list of near relations which functioned for this purpose at Ahmadnagar Fort. Some of these letters are from strangers or near-strangers. Bul has also written to me and Sri Prakasa but I have not sent any answers to them. During these 2½ years I have got unused to writing miscellaneous letters even to friends. After a long gap it is not easy to pick up old threads again. Of course if I was out I would do so easily enough but here I cannot develop the mood to throw off letters apart from those which I have got used to writing. And then again there is the limitation of two letters a week (though I can receive four letters a week). Regularly I write these two letters to the small number of my correspondents and then there is no room left for more. Today I am writing, besides this letter to you, to Amma in Lahore.

Some months ago, soon after the liberation of Paris, I suggested to you to try to get news, by letter or cable, of Louise Morin, Jean-Jacques and Nanu and others in France &c. I wonder if you did so—I wish you would write and find out how our friends are and what has happened to them. Apart from our own desire to know about them, a letter from you will cheer them up. These messages across the seas, after long silences and painful experiences, are very pleasing to the recipients. They bring the perfume of friendship and comradeship in this hard and often unfeeling world.

And Edward Thompson also—He is carrying on, I suppose, as best he can in his lingering and painful illness. Despite appearances, he is emotional and very friendly and he would welcome a few lines from you.

One war is over and another is continuing, and Europe is dazed and starving, with many of its cities a mass of rubble, and in England they are going to have a general election and there will be a lot of shouting and ballyhoo and make-believe, and all the old puppet shows will continue and yet change in the process. So we also continue and yet change—

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 117.

May 26—Saturday

Today is the Buddhist New Year's Day—the full moon of the month of *Vaisakh*—the anniversary, according to tradition, of Buddha's birth, buddhahood, & death. The Buddhist era begins with the date of the death—So today the year 2489 begins.

We have so many holidays & festivals in India and yet this day, connected with the greatest of India's sons, is not celebrated except in a very small way—

May 31, 1945

Indu darling,

I have received two letters from you dated 19th and 23rd May—Nos. 108 and 109. The latter of these came this morning.

I love your descriptions of Srinagar and the neighbourhood, of the dawn touching the snowy peaks and gradually creeping down and spreading over the lowlands. Some time ago I read an airman's account of the dawn. He was flying high up and was enveloped in the early morning sunlight, but the earth was still a dark shadow and gradually it emerged from the gloom. So it must feel also if one is on a high mountain top.

I remember the Gupkar area fairly well. In 1940 I spent some days there and much earlier, over a year before you were born, the whole family lived in a large house almost at the foot of Shankaracharya.

Gupkar was not built over then as now and there were few houses. Nor had the Maharajah's palace spread out in all directions enclosing the land round about Chashme Shahi. We went frequently to Chashme Shahi and up Shankaracharya. Janki *chacha*—do you remember him?—He was one of *Dadu's* closest friends—was staying with us and he was a great walker. Every morning, before most of us were up, he had his little constitutional which usually meant going up Shankaracharya by one route and coming down on the other side.

The guest house near Chashme Shahi I remember very well. What a lovely situation. The view from its balcony over the Dal Lake and towards the mountains is hard to beat—In those days in 1916 Swamiji (Swami Sant Deo) used to live there. He was in high favour with the old Maharaja Partap Singh⁶⁵⁶ (the uncle of the present one), and a crowd of Punjabis, especially women, was always to be found round about him. Dol Amma and Bibi Amma thought no end of him and we used to go to him frequently and consume the lovely fruits of his garden which he gave us in abundance. I lost sight of the Swami for many years and then, in 1940, on my way back *via* the Jammu route, I met him somewhere half-way in the mountains. I used to like him. He was (and I hope still is) a jolly, cheerful person with plenty of commonsense. I wonder if he is still flourishing. Nikku should know for his family was greatly attached to the old Swami.

Whenever Tej Bahadurji goes up to Srinagar he stays as the Maharaja's guest in the Chashme Shahi guest house. I visited him then in the summer of 1940. It brought back old memories to me and I gazed for long at the magnificent view spread out before me. And now even 1940 is an old memory.

If Bijju *chacha* wants you to shift over to his house, it would be well to agree to his proposal when it is convenient for you to do so. Perhaps so long as Betty and Raja and their children are staying on in Srinagar you had better continue where you are. Bijju *chacha's* house will be quite comfortable for you. You are likely to have much more company there for he likes to have his friends round about him.

There are ever so many places in Kashmir which invited one to trek. Pahalgam, itself a lovely spot, is a fairly good spot. There is a lake, rather high up, but just one day's good trekking, which is worth a visit. A place I liked is on the way to Kolahai, also one day's easy trek from Pahalgam. I forget the name of the place but there were beautiful meadows skirted by pinewoods. There is a fairly decent rest house there with two good rooms. You could easily go there and even take

656. The third Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir who ruled from 1887 to 1927.

Rajiva with you. It is always desirable to have a pony with you when trekking. Pahalgam has that disadvantage you mention—too many visitors go there during the summer months, many of them invalids, and a small place easily gets crowded.

Last Saturday—the 27th—was rather a special day, but very few people in India took notice of it, although we have a vast number of festivals and holidays and a passion for anniversaries. It was the *Vaisakhi Purnima*, the full moon of the month of *Vaisakha*, the last day of that month, leading on to the *Jyestha* or more simply जेठ—Tradition says that Buddha was born on this day, attained enlightenment on the anniversary of that day, and finally died also on the *Vaisakhi Purnima*. The Buddhist era begins from the date of his death, thus this day is the Buddhist New Year's Day and is celebrated as such in the Buddhist countries. I remember the celebrations in Ceylon when we were there in May 1931. Last Saturday began the 2489th year of this era. Historically speaking, Buddha was the biggest person born in India and it is right that we should remember this day.

We are right in the middle of the hot weather here and it is pretty hot—Sometimes, though not frequently, the nights are bad. But then there is one peculiarity of Barcilly, due to its nearness to the hills—suddenly a cool wind comes at night and makes a difference. We have been having very hot and sticky nights. But last night turned cool rather suddenly and some warm covering was required in the early morning. We sleep in the open—It is as hot as ever today.

What an extraordinary story of misadventure and good luck you have written about—the exploits of the Tweedy family. Kishtwar is one of the most out of the way provinces of Kashmir, very seldom visited by tourists or others. In my mind it is connected with an old legend that the women of Kishtwar are very beautiful!

I don't think you need worry at all about Rajiva's health. He is doing well, his weight is good and he keeps cheerful—that in itself is a sign of health. It does not matter if there is slight delay in his sitting up or walking. That will all come in good time—I think you should have a simple ceremony soon now both for the name giving and the खीर चढ़ाई. It should not be delayed much longer. Kashmir is a suitable place for it and there is Birju *chacha* to help you fix it up. He is sure to be interested. So ask him about it.

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 118.

June 1. Friday

So June begins and we have nearly completed 34 months of imprisonment—Asaf Ali was released a few days ago owing to illness. He is completely broken down in health and is now in a nursing home.

About a fortnight ago or less I decided to revise my MSS again completely. There were some fresh ideas also which necessitated some additions and more or less minor changes. So I worked at this and finished it two days ago. This was my second full revision. Is it the last?

June 3 Sunday

I was priding myself that for nearly six months I had not had a cold. This morning there were the slight beginnings of one.

x x x x

The Supt. came today and said that it was getting hotter and hotter—which was perfectly true—and that he had come to the conclusion that we should be transferred to a cooler place—Almora. Had we any objection? I told him I had nothing to add to what I had said previously.

Well, so we are going to have another change soon—and just when Wavell is on his way back to India, and over-optimistic people are expecting our early release.

7-6-1945

Darling Betty,

I have your letter of the 18th May, together with the boys' notes. I have got a bit of a cold and am not in a mood to write but I wanted to send a few lines for the kids. Also to thank you for the lovely mangoes which have come from Bombay. There were 4 dozen *alphonsos*. I am glad you are enjoying your visit to Kashmir. I was sure you would.

Below is a joint letter for Harsha and Ajit.

Darlings Harsha and Ajit, It made me happy to get your letters and to learn what you are doing in Kashmir. Riding and walking

and hiking are all very pleasant there. But have you had swims in the Dal Lake? And when you went to Gulmarg, you must have gone up higher still and reached the snowline. There is no end to the games one can play on the snow. You will see plenty of snow and ice at other places also—at Kolahoi, Amarnath and perhaps at Sonemarg.

Yes, it is a long time since I came away and both of you must have grown a lot since then. Still I think I shall recognize you when we meet again. When that will take place I do not know. But whenever we meet both of you will have to tell me so much of your life at school at Gwalior and your adventures in Kashmir. I am glad to learn that you are growing up bright and strong and healthy and enjoy your work and games. Love to you both from your *Mamu*. And love to you also, little sister.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

June 7, 1945

Darling Indu,

Was it last week that I wrote you about my recently acquired freedom from colds? Well, I was a little premature, for, soon after, a tiny wee bit of a cold, hardly noticeable, crept in somewhere within my system, and like the camel nosing itself into the tent, began to spread. An odd moment to choose for we are at the apex of the hot weather. So for some days now I have had a cold, nothing much, but there it is, and a cold is a cold and a bit of a nuisance.

The heat here has revived old memories. For some years I had had no such experience. Ahmadnagar was after all a plateau of nearly 2000 ft. altitude and the hottest day there was mild compared to the northern variety. Besides conditions there were different. There is a certain ferocity about the *loo* in northern India which is comparable to nature's wilder outbursts. It does not last very long for it heralds the monsoon. Here too I suppose the rain will come soon—It is possible, however, that we may be transferred to a cooler jail from here.

Feroze has sent me a parcel of mangoes—*dasehris* grown in Anand Bhawan. There were just 100 of them, all in a raw state. They are being preserved in the right way so that they may ripen. Tell Feroze that I have got this parcel. Along with it came another from Bombay

—*alphonsos* sent on Betty's instructions, 4 dozens of them. On the whole they were in good condition. What a gorgeous thing is the mango—surely the king of fruits.

I enclose a letter which came to me here from Maria Lorenzini, a lady living in San Francisco. Her book of poems—*Seeding Democracy*—also reached me here. I want you to send her a proper appreciative reply. The poems were interesting though rather beyond me occasionally. Most of them were reactions to musical pieces, and as I was ignorant of the music which inspired them, it was not easy for me to react in the same way. But of course you are not going to say all this to her. You will write a proper, nice, agreeable letter to her which should give her a moment's pleasure. It was good of her to send her book to me.

The lady has sent me a cutting containing her picture (I enclose this also). It is a powerful face and I feel like wilting before its pleasant but stern gaze—perhaps this feeling is more due to the Bareilly weather.

One of the advantages of being in jail evidently is that other people have to answer your letters.

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my 119th letter.

June 8th Friday

The cold has persisted and has brought some fever in its train which continues. The Supt. has been very attentive and has done his best to treat me. (The Supt.'s name is Dr. Abdul Ghaffar—He is not now in the I.M.S.). I have felt depressed—a natural consequence of the cold &c. on the one side and the terrific heat on the other.

This morning Coxhill the bright D.M. here came to see us & told us that we were going to be transferred to Almora either tomorrow or the day after. Bolam the S.P. will accompany us & he is due back this afternoon from Naini Tal when final arrangements will be fixed up.

So ten weeks of Bareilly C.P. and 34 months of internment—and now Almora.

June 9, Saturday

Well—we did not go today and there is still (5.30 p.m.) no news about tomorrow.

My fever, the little there is, continues and my face appears to have grown thinner—so people say—Yesterday we were weighed—I was 118 lbs.—a weight which takes me right back thirty years or so. That must have been my weight then and since then I suppose there was a gradual but continuous increase—There was no looking back except for short periods in prison. So I gained in the course of these many years about 25 lbs. Now having lost these I go back—But probably under normal health-giving conditions I shall soon recover ten pounds or so.

But the question troubles me—why I have lost this weight, especially here in Barcilly. The heat? May be, but I am not wholly satisfied. Even if that is so it means a considerable lowering down of resistance. So far as personal attention is concerned the Supt. here is continually thinking of some new way to make our life here easier—within the rules of course—He has been given a wide discretion in regard to us and he exercises it freely, often to my embarrassment.

Fortunately Narendra Deva has flourished here and has put on 5 lbs. or so.

Later. A bunch of letters—from Indu, Betty, Yunus & Bul—also two books: Isherwood's⁶⁵⁷ translation of the Gita which I have been wanting to see ever since I read about it—and a book by Nan—*Prison Days*⁶⁵⁸—her prison diary—I did not know of the latter book and had no idea it was being published.

We are told that we are leaving tomorrow morning at 5.30—which is really 4.30 a.m. So tomorrow the mountains again and the long familiar road to Almora.

Today we completed 34 months—we begin the new month with Almora.

The Supt. here has done everything he conceivably could, & more, to add to our comfort during the journey—He has behaved almost like a fussy grandmother—Anyway he has been very decent.

657. Christopher Isherwood (b. 1904); novelist and playwright; his interest in Indian mysticism allied him with the Vedantic Society in Los Angeles and his later writings include *An Approach to the Vedanta* and *Ramakrishna and His Disciples*.

658. This contains an account of the author's life in jail from August 1942 to June 1943.

June 10th Sunday

1945 From Bareilly C.P. to Almora D.J.

An early start. I got up at 4 a.m. (which meant really 3 a.m.)—By six we were off in a comfortable car with Bolam the S.P. as our companion and a young man in the army who was going to Ranikhet. A police lorry followed with a guard and our luggage.

The morning hours were pleasant, though warm. It became cooler after Kathgodam but still it was warm enough to be slightly unpleasant. We reached Almora a little before 2 p.m. and Bolam, handing over charge to the jailer and taking a receipt for us two, departed. I felt very tired and the unpacking & arranging &c. tired me still further—as I had a temperature throughout.

Almora District Jail

June 11—Monday—

Back again to the old place after nearly ten years. It is considerably changed but there are many familiar landmarks—My old stone—the huge thing that I had dug out of the centre of the yard and then, with the help of a dozen or more convicts, made to stand up there is no more—It was broken up & used for building operations.

It is surprisingly warm here yet, for all that, the change from Bareilly is most marked. Probably it represents 20°F of temperature—Here the maximum now is 90° which is bad enough. In Bareilly it used to be 112° or over. Sleeping indoors last night I required no warm covering, or any covering at all.

On the whole it is pleasant here after the fantastic heat and *loo* of Bareilly. A delightful sound, bringing old memories, the rustling of the wind through the deodars—how like it is to the sea slowly advancing & retreating on the beach.

x x x x

I am intrigued by the fever I have been having. I see no reason for it. The heat? Possibly, but I am not sure. Anyhow I am resting a lot. If it does not disappear in two or three days, I shall worry a little.

x x x x

The Supt. here is the Civil Surgeon—Dr. H.H. Khan. The Jailor—a Sharma.

June 12, 1945

Darling Indu,

I am writing to you from a new address—though not so new. I have come back to the old place almost exactly ten years after I left it so suddenly to fly to Europe. It has changed somewhat but many of the old landmarks are still there, well-remembered nooks and corners and tops of trees peeping over the walls. We cannot see the mountains at all as the jail is situated over a ridge and the walls prevent a distant view. In winter and during the rains, I remember, this sometimes produced a strange and rather pleasant sensation of being in the clouds or near them, cut off from the rest of the world.

As I was looking round this old-new environment, faint memories began to stir within me, memories not so much of the material objects surrounding me but of the vague intangible past with all its associations, and gradually more vivid pictures took their place. This train of thought was started by a gentle soothing sound, of which I was hardly consciously aware for some little time but which seemed to envelop me and whisper in my ears. There was a dream quality about this sound, something that distinguished it from the more obvious noises of the waking day. Or perhaps it was rather like that middle state which lies between waking and sleeping when vague ideas float through the mind and pass away leaving no trail behind. It had a slightly hypnotic effect on me, and then I realised that I was listening to the rustle of the breeze through the deodars. There are no deodars within the jail enclosure, but just outside there are a few of them in a clump, and I can just see the tops of two or three of them quivering as a slight wind passes through them. What a lovely sound it is, arising as it were out of nothing and passing off into nothingness, and then rising again with its slow rhythmic motion, emblem of nature's basic harmony. Sometimes it reminded me of the advancing and retreating tides on a distant beach.

After a little gap I got a sheaf of letters, among them three from you. Two of the letters were actually given to me as we were leaving Bareilly and I read them in the car. Rajiva's snaps also came. The old boy looks bright and healthy and energetic. I think you are right in saying that it is not desirable for infants to sit up or walk too soon. This premature growth looks attractive and pleases the fond parents but I

have an idea that one has to pay for it in some way or other in later life. I think a slower and more solid growth, both physical and mental, yields better results. I do not want particularly to hold myself up as an example but I have an idea that my own growth was by no means too fast. In some ways it was perhaps even retarded. Anyway I am still growing!

I wrote to you in my last letter that I had developed a cold. It was not much of a cold but taken with the heat—what a combination!—I felt poorly. There was some loss in weight also in Bareilly. The Superintendent there was anxious to feed me up and produced all manner of things which, during the course of a fairly long life, I had so far managed to avoid—Ovaltine and Horlicks &c. Well, I swallowed them—Horlicks for the first time in my life! There was nothing much the matter with me—What intrigued me was that I could not quite find out what was the matter with me. I was examined and found to be sound in the obvious places. Probably it was just an odd combination of various circumstances—my getting a cold whilst it was so hot and some other minor factors, not important in themselves but helping each other to produce a derangement of the bodily functions. What a delicate thing is the body. It is a matter for continuous surprise to me how this intricate structure functions so satisfactorily in spite of persistent misuse and unfavourable environments. Has it ever struck you as odd how the body maintains a more or less even temperature even when it is far hotter or colder all round it? If there was not some delicate apparatus to maintain this even temperature imagine the result—with the atmosphere temperature at 112°F or more we would all develop terribly high fever and pass out, or when the temperature is below zero, we would freeze to death.

I am sorry you have lost weight. What is your present weight and what has been your maximum? The gradual reduction in my weight at Ahmadnagar and Bareilly has brought my weight back to what it was when I was in my middle twenties—a slim lad who had once coxed a boat. This going back to the past has its advantages in many ways and I am not sure that I would not like to go back. But there is one very serious drawback—there would be no Indu then—she would just be a hope and an aspiration.

It is unusually warm here in Almora but still there is a world of difference between Bareilly and Almora—Measured in Fahrenheit degrees I suppose the difference is about 25° . It is pleasanter here and my old body is approving of the change. It is important of course that the body should approve independently of the mind. The body, though intimately connected with the mind (and indeed the mind is

part of the body), has a way of going its own way despite the advice and the reasoning of the mind. The mind is of course much more highly developed and perhaps because of that its natural functions have been covered up or directed by thoughts and urges. But the body is comparatively more primitive and still reacts more naturally. As somebody said—a mind can and often does lie, a body can hardly do so.

So I expect to be quite fit again within a few days. The mere feel of the mountains has a tonic effect on me. And though you are still far from me, it is pleasant to think that we are both in the Himalayas and, as the crow flies, not so far after all.

I have received *Puphi's* little book: *Prison Days*. It is rather thin. In fact it is hardly a book. What there is of it is well written and is easy reading. This business of keeping a diary in jail is a tricky affair. What must one or can one write? The trivial happenings which fill the days? Yes sometimes for even the apparently trivial has sometimes a deep significance for us. Who do we write for? For ourselves or others? It is very difficult for the average human being to be absolutely frank about himself or others. So even in our personal diaries we tend to be circumspect, thinking of the future when other eyes may read them. And this leads to triviality and artificiality.

Isherwood's translation of the Gita (which Bharati sent) has also reached me. This was welcome as I had been reading reviews of the book in American papers and stories of Isherwood becoming a Hindu mystic. From what I have seen of it, I like the translation.

If Edward Thompson has recovered this is certainly something on the verge of the miraculous. I do not think anyone, and certainly not Edward himself, expected recovery.

I am deeply distressed to learn of Rup's brain troubles. It is horrible to think of her attacking her father.

Tell Yunus that I have received his letter. He wants me to send him word, through you, if I want anything from Peshawar. What am I likely to want here, except good news of him and his bride?

Perhaps you have moved to Bijju *chacha's* house already. Anyway this letter is going to the old address.

We have been here in Almora just two days—We came all the way from Bareilly by car—We started at 6 a.m. (and that meant my getting up at 4 which is really 3) and reached here at about 2 p.m. It was not a very strenuous journey but I felt tired at the end of it, partly because of the heat & partly because I had not been feeling well—Here, for the present, I am resting mostly.

The Anand Bhawan *dasehri* mangoes have been slowly ripening and are quite good. We have brought them along with us here. Here we found fairly good apricots and the tiny variety of pear which is rather delicious. What do you call this kind of baby pear?

This is my letter No. 120 to you. The three letters which I have received from you are dated 2/6, 3/6 and 5/6—Nos. 110 to 112.

Love

Your loving
Papu

June 14 Thursday

I am improving slowly & feeling generally better. A slight temperature still persists but daily it is at a lower level.

x x x x

One rather surprising thing. For the first time during these three years of detention we have had a more or less decent Indian cook—He turns out to be a Congress prisoner from the well-known Salt area of Alinora Dist. convicted for activities in 1942 &c. Later he went to Bombay & other places & was eventually arrested in Lahore. His name is Mangal Singh & he appears to be a decent person. He cooks after the Indian fashion well and even knows how to deal with eggs. And this is Almora D.J.!

x x x x

I am told that people come daily to the jail gate expecting my release. On the 12th there was quite a crowd because of a news item emanating from Naini Tal. Yesterday & today also.

I am not anxious to go out just yet—at any rate for a week or two. I want to recuperate a little here before other work calls me. Even if I was suddenly released I would probably stay here for three or four days more—visit Khali &c. The prospect of descending to the plains after this small but persistent indisposition—before the rains—is rather terrifying. However there is no need to worry—nobody is releasing us just yet!

The long expected statement⁶⁵⁹ by Wavell must have been issued today or even yesterday. We get our news late here & so we have not seen it yet or heard about it.

Later 10 p.m.

The Jailer came at about 9 p.m. and said he had just heard a part of Wavell's broadcast. He did not seem to have understood the political aspect of it, except that Gandhiji, Jinnah &c. were being invited to meet the Viceroy on the 25th—He was interested in the question of our release. Apparently it was stated that the W.C. members would be released soon or almost immediately.

x

x

x

x

So perhaps we might be discharged tomorrow June 15—after 2 years, 10 months and 6 days or 1041 days. And we are expected to rush about immediately—to Panchgani or Bombay—later perhaps to Delhi—I am greatly put out at this prospect. I did so much want to have at least three weeks to myself—to rest—visit Indu in Kashmir & generally to meet old friends quietly.

June 15, Friday 8 a.m.

Ten minutes ago we were informed that we were unconditionally released.

659. On 14 June 1945, Wavell, in a broadcast, explaining the proposals of the British Government which reiterated the Cripps offer, proposed the formation of an interim national government consisting of representatives of the main communities and equal proportions of 'Caste Hindus' and Muslims along with the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief. He called a conference of the Indian leaders at Simla to consider the formation of such a government and to choose their nominees for it. He also ordered the release of the members of the Congress Working Committee.

APPENDIX

1. To Padmaja Naidu¹

Allahabad
30.4.1936

Bebec,

I have just arrived and I am told that both my letter to you and the parcel of books have come back from Bhopal with some inscription—'addressee left' or 'addressee not found'. I have not seen them yet. Tomorrow they will be sent again.

I was happy to see you. I wanted to do so and yet almost wished you would not come. It was cruel to make you journey in this weather and spend the night in a station waiting room. I have been thinking how very selfish and self-centred I am.

I enclose the circulars I spoke to you about.

As far as I remember I asked my publishers in London to send you a copy of the *Autobiography* to your Calcutta address. It is doubtful if the book will reach anyone in India, but still you might make sure that if it does come, it might be forwarded to you from Calcutta.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. To Padmaja Naidu¹

Akola
23.5.36

Bebec,

You will let me know, will you not?, what the doctors decide. And if there is to be an operation, send me a word. A foolish way of troubling you, for what can I do? But we function in foolish ways—even a hardened and tough person like me. Meanwhile, I shall talk and talk

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

till I exhaust myself and others. But physical weariness is preferable to the other variety, and incessant talk and even vain repetitions produce a sensation of action and, at any rate, keep in check the mind's disorders and emptiness.

My love to you, my dear, and keep a stout heart for the ordeals you have to face.

Yours,
Jawahar

3. To Padmaja Naidu¹

Allahabad
25.5.1936

My dear,

I slept most of the time in the train yesterday. The night before I had hardly slept for I started from Akola in the small hours and had to change at Bhusaval soon after, and in between there were *jais* and crowds making the night unbearable with their interruptions and noises. And so I slept during the day. But during the intervals I read Toller's *Letters From Prison* and I almost lost myself in them and prison seemed to surround me. And yet, strangely enough, you were always hovering about, whether it was Toller's prison or mine. My mind wandered to you and thought of you and how you were faring.

I am going day after tomorrow to Delhi for a day and then to the Punjab for a week. I don't want to go, but life is hard.

Shall I send you Toller's *Letters*? I think I will without waiting for your answer.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

4. To Padmaja Naidu¹

Allahabad

5.6.36

My dear,

Last night I returned, just for a day. Vaguely I had hoped to hear from you even during my wanderings in the Punjab. It was a foolish notion for you could have hardly caught me there. But I was anxious and I thought of you and the want of news preyed upon my mind. Fortunately for me the mind was kept pretty well occupied and so was the tongue and the legs and most parts of the body—too occupied indeed, for soon there was a revolt and the body gave notice of a prolonged strike. I capitulated rather ignominiously but wisely. There was nothing much the matter with me—only 'flu and various pains and a villainous throat. I suppressed the lot within two days, though the throat is still misbehaving. It must be taught a lesson. The general strike having collapsed, I can deal more harshly with individual members. So for the next three days I propose to make the throat do some hard work at Unao, and then it may have a chance to rest. Khali is off now, unfortunately, as Ranjit is lying ill at Mussoorie. To Mussoorie I shall therefore go about the 10th for ten days.

The Punjab visit was of the nature of a cyclone. Bombay faded off into suburban respectability before the elemental crowds of the Punjab towns and villages. I go back to the Punjab as soon as I have the chance.

Do not write to me so dismally and hopelessly. It is so unlike you. Or write to me as you will but do not feel that way. Defeatism does not become you. I feel strong today in spite of physical weariness, and the difficulties that surround me seem to fade and shrink away. Perhaps it is the intoxication of the shouting crowds—half-mad they were and some of their madness entered my veins. Be strong with me!

It is very late—I have had a heavy day and the night is far spent. In another four hours I am supposed to be up to go to the station.

And so good night, lotus-born,² and may you be sleeping well and dreaming pleasantly.

Yours,
Jawahar

Toller was sent to you long ago.

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. Literal meaning of the word 'Padmaja.'

5. To Padmaja Naidu¹

Mussoorie

16.6.36

Bebce, your telegram. Perhaps it is as well. Get rid of this perpetual trouble and pain. I have no great faith in doctors as a whole, but surgery I believe in and I have a definite feeling that this operation will do you good. Out with the appendix therefore and look at life without pain. Your mother will keep us informed, I hope. We are here till the 23rd when we shall all go to Allahabad. I shall be touring in some rural areas for three or four days but every night I shall return to Anand Bhawan. And on the 28th morning I shall go to Wardha. How long I shall stay there I do not know. The capacity for argument is almost unlimited. Perhaps I might run down to Bombay from there for a day to have a glimpse of you.

Ranjit will probably go down with me as this high altitude does not suit him. Later he may go to Bombay. He is slightly better but I think he should consult some specialists and the like in Bombay.

There are no flowers here now, or hardly any, except for some in private gardens. The lovely hank of violets that you saw long long ago is a memory like so much else. But Ranjit tells me that his garden at Khali is one mass of bloom and the fruit trees are laden with peaches and apricots. He had worked hard, hoping to surprise me pleasantly, when I came to visit him, with a bit of Kashmir. He had even grown typical Kashmiri vegetables which are not found elsewhere. And now I am here and he cannot go back, and the monkeys eat the fruits and pull out the flowers.

We live very far from Mussoorie. We are quite a mile away even from Woodstock, on the Tehri Road. I like this. I have some quiet and, so far as I am concerned, Mussoorie does not exist. But Woodstock does and you seem to inhabit it, and sometimes you steal up quietly to pay us a visit—to Snowdon was it? I do not connect you at all with illness then. You deceived me of course as you have frequently done.

How foolish trifles remain in the pigeonholes of memory! I remember sending some servants to meet you when you first came to Snowdon. They were to show you the way. And so that you might recognize

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

them I wrote to you that they had claret-coloured liveries! And then I gave you a book—do you remember it?—Gilbert Frankau's² *One of Us*. My literary taste ran in that direction then.

Surely I was never pink and white pretty. I must protest. I thought I was a sufficiently agreeable youth and, if necessary, I can produce evidence to this effect. But your idea of masculine beauty must have been even then of the strong and silent type, hard-faced, stern and purposeful, or is it soulful? Well, well, I am not silent anyway now, though I was in those days.

When I come to Bombay I shall find you convalescing, dreaming, and getting well, dreaming of the many things you are going to do now that you have got rid of your pains. How delightful it must be to lie still and dream through the long hours and build fairy castles and try to mould this world into something better and more desirable. I have always envied this stage of convalescence, perhaps because I have never really had it, being so aggressively and vulgarly healthy. I want a little more time to dream but instead I have to be thinking of all manner of unlovely people and their doings, and I rush out to smite them with tongue and pen. A fatiguing process resulting chiefly in a bad throat and in indifferent articles. But I seem to be useful to the press at least. What a lot of copy they get out of me.

What a lot of people and groups are after my blood—they will end by making me even more conceited than I am, and that, as you know, is saying a great deal. Liberals, Responsivists, Communalists, Big Business, and of course my own dear colleagues of the Congress, do not love me, I am afraid. It amuses me, irritates at times, pleases me at other times, but my chief grievance is that it all takes up so much time, and I suppose it makes me more hard-faced than ever. But behind all that there is something to soften me—the vast and overwhelming crowds that come with affection and hope. It is a strange medley.

Tagore (the Poet of course) has sent me a short but very generous and beautiful appreciation of my *Autobiography*. More conceit!

And so, brave and smiling one, smile away through your operation and continue for long to be a joy to your friends. I am destined to live for a frightfully long time, I am told. An expert astrologer has

2. Gilbert Frankau (1884-1952); English writer; his works include *One of Us* (1912); *The City of Fear* (1917); *Farewell Romance* (1936); *World Without End* (1943); and *Oliver Trenton, K.D.* (1951).

fixed the date of my death even. It is still a quarter of a century hence. And I don't want to be lonelier than ever during this arid waste of years.

All my love,

Jawahar

6. To Padmaja Naidu¹

Mussoorie

17.6.36

My dear, I have been thinking of you so much as I sit here and look at the distant Dun valley and Sivaliks and the great plain beyond. It is a beautiful view fading off in the far distance. But often the clouds creep up and blot out the prospect and assume fantastic shapes, and my thoughts wander far away to Bombay. How are you, I wonder, what are you doing, what thoughts course through your fertile brain?

For two days I have not been out of the house. I have no special urge to go out. I like to sit, my body prefers it after having been knocked about a lot recently. In the Punjab, when they made me travel by car over 250 miles of dusty roads in the course of a day (which included four or five big meetings, some smaller ones, and, worst of all, processions) I swore that I preferred a bullock cart to a motor car. I have not quite recovered psychologically from that feeling. And so I sit, not idly, for numerous files and papers surround me. Usually I go out in the evening as a matter of duty more than pleasure. Last evening it rained and so I made that an excuse, although as a matter of fact I love walking in the rain. Instead I faced bravely my correspondence files, and between Upadhyaya and me we got through 70 or 80 letters. Not bad for an afternoon and evening.

And then of course there are the children. I have hardly had the chance of being with them for many years and they have grown up so much since then. It is almost like making friends afresh. But it did not take much time. Their language is terribly Americanised—their accent, words and phrases. Things are usually swell or slick or yummy (whatever that may be). Lousy is a favourite word. Everybody seems to be 'trading' at Woodstock, that is exchanging sweets or other articles.

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

Did you develop this terrible commercial instinct when you were here? Or the American accent, which I must confess I do not like, although I like American words.

Half my brief holiday is over today. As soon as I return I shall be up to my neck in work, controversy, argument and conflict. What would happen to me, I wonder, if this atmosphere of tension and conflict left me? Probably I would shrivel up and give up the ghost. I mentioned to you yesterday, I think, that a worthy astrologer of repute had fixed my death somewhere in the early sixties. But I did not tell you that according to him I shall get fed up with the world long before that and turn sannyasi! It is hard to believe it, though a person who is sufficiently fed up is capable of much.

Upadhyaya waits for the post. It is a long way off and he has to make daily pilgrimage of it. So I must cease my aimless writing and leave you in peace.

My love to you,

Yours,
Jawahar

7. To Padmaja Naidu¹

Musscorie
20.6.36

Bebec,

So you have gone through the ordeal and are all the better for it, I hope. Ordeals do improve one. I was sure you would win through. It is the hefty and outwardly strong that collapse.

But you must not be bothered with letters now. You must rest and dream of the health that will be yours in the days to come.

I shall try to pay you a little visit early next month.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

8. To Padmaja Naidu¹

Allahabad

16.7.36

My dear,

I have not written to you these many days and I have had little news of you. On my return from Bombay I found your little notes, which you had sent from the clinic, waiting for me. I pondered over the advice you had sent me so emphatically. The immediate occasion for it was past. I had survived it though in the process I suppose I had got a few more grey hairs. It is a tiring business altogether. What will happen in future I don't know. It seems all so topsy-turvy. After all, does it matter? Anyway why should you worry? That is the height of absurdity.

Are you getting stronger and stronger? You may have slight setbacks—such things happen frequently. Do not attach too much importance to them. You have got over the real thing. The smaller obstacles do not matter. I do not know if you will be in Bombay next month when I come there. The idea of Lahore seems silly to me. I am going there but I am not looking forward to it.

I did not follow very closely the German doctor's advice, so far as speaking was concerned. The throat is better but I cough a lot which is a nuisance. But that of course will not interfere with my long speeches. I don't know Sind. I don't feel attracted to it.

It is late at night. After a few hours of sleep I start off for the wilds of Sind. I shall sleep a lot in the train for I have been encroaching on the night for some time past in an attempt to get rid of arrears of work. And as a little gift to my friends I have just sent off an article² which will not fill them with joy and enthusiasm.

When will I see you next? Whenever that is I am looking forward to finding you full of health.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. "Congress and Socialism", see *Selected Works*, Vol. 7, pp. 317-327.

9. To Padmaja Naidu¹

Nawabshah, Sind
26.7.36

My dear, how are you and where are you? I have had no news from you and of you. That I hope means that you are doing well and marching to health and fitness.

I am nearing the end of this Sind tour. Another day and a half and I shall be speeding away to the Punjab. I am a little tired but my voice holds and the throat is functioning more or less properly. I have taken some care of it but on the whole I believe that it likes a little shouting from time to time. Returning from Bombay I tried to give it rest as advised by the doctor. The attempt failed after two or three days. Except for a troublesome cough I have no trouble. The Punjab is likely to be a severer trial. As usual they have drawn up a mad programme for me there.

The Sindhi people have their good qualities and I rather like them. But they are a curious mixture of the Muslim feudal classes and the Hindu *bania* class—neither very admirable as classes go. Still they have push and energy and that is something to be thankful for. They seem to be singularly devoid of any artistic sense. And the colour they sport in their striped pyjamas are a trial.

I have been to the hottest parts of Sind—including Jacobabad—and yet curiously I have had good weather. The night at Jacobabad was cool and pleasant. This kind of weather is a rare phenomenon at this time of the year.

Today I had a ride on a camel—my first longish experience of the kind. I liked it, except for the smell of the camel. I think I could manage easily a few hours on camel-back.

Probably I shall reach Bombay on the 18th.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

10. To Padmaja Naidu¹

Madras
9.10.36

Bebec,

Your note. The arrangements for my tour are remarkably vague and inefficient and I cannot know for certain what is going to happen. I have however told the bosses here that I should like to spend a little time with you. Possibly I might be in Pondicherry at about tea-time on the 17th.

I am dead tired. My body is limp because of the struggles to get out of crowds and my hands are swollen on account of too much hand-shaking. The crowds have been astounding and they have often worked themselves up to a state of frenzy. The big voices here, both in the Congress and outside, are suitably impressed. But I am myself impressed. Why does this happen? I can't make out and all my vanity does not help me to understand.

It is 1.30 a.m. now and I shall have to get up soon after 5 to start off by car for the southern tour. So to bed.

Yours,
Jawahar

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

11. To Padmaja Naidu¹

Tinnevely
13.10.36

Bebec,

With my grey hair and advancing age I might be forgiven perhaps if I took to the habits of age. But what on earth do you mean by fussing about in this manner. I can put up with much, even female tyranny, but I draw the line at being put to bed at 6 p.m. I shall certainly rebel if you make any such ridiculous attempt.

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

I am rather glad this Aurobindo Ashram affair has fizzled out.² I can now get a better measure of these long-haired inmates. Though I must say that I am disappointed at not seeing the glamorous lady.³

I have reached my southernmost point of this tour and within a few minutes we go north again. We are only 60 miles from Cape Comorin and I had an insane desire to visit the place again. I was even prepared to cut out an odd meeting or two. But reason triumphed in the end. It was not possible to go 120 miles of indifferent road within two hours.

Do not be too sure of seeing me at the appointed hour at the meeting at Pondicherry. It has been impossible for me to stick to a timetable and inevitably as the day advances there is a lag and this goes on increasing. Better come to the meeting after you have learnt of my arrival.

Yours,
Jawahar

2. The French Government had issued orders banning Jawaharlal's meeting Sri Aurobindo during the former's visit to Pondicherry. See also *Selected Works*, Vol. 7, p. 674.
3. Madame Mirra Richard (1878-1973); known as the Mother, was of French origin and settled in Pondicherry Ashram set up by Sri Aurobindo in 1926; became the spiritual head of the Ashram after the death of Sri Aurobindo in 1950; set up an international township called Auroville to serve as a meeting place for the followers of the ideals of Sri Aurobindo.

12. To Padmaja Naidu¹

In Train
20.10.1936

My dear,

The tour is over at last and I am speeding away to the north. I am passing through the exalted territories and even here crowds gather at the stations, including officials. The night will not be as peaceful as I hoped. But probably I shall sleep through the noise.

I forgot my weariness when I saw you and for a while at least I was not the President of the Congress. How good it was to forget that fact and to see you radiant and looking well. But when you left me and the train rolled away the presidentship descended upon me, though

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

not wholly for the mind wandered and thought of pleasanter subjects. Satyamurti insisted on my writing a farewell message for the Tamil Nad. I tried hard but the eyes would not remain open and the mind was beyond control. After half an hour's vain effort I succeeded in sleeping. Not for long, however, for at every station there was a noisy crowd. And so to Madras and after a brief stay the train again.

I tried to write the 'Tamil Nad message'² but in the middle of a sentence I would doze away. The effort to keep awake became a torture. I managed to write something. It was not very bright.

During these three days there have been 'incidents' of course and I have misbehaved. Yesterday at Guntur there was even a petty scuffle in the crowd at the meeting and, as is my foolish habit, I tried to throw myself from the platform on to the heaving mass. Poor dear old Konda Venkatappayya³ and some others in their endeavours to protect me clung on to me and I had to handle them rather roughly in order to free myself. The dear old man was frightened at my vehemence and the way I flung about my arms and legs. Nothing need have happened if I had not shown temper at a previous stage when someone made a foolish interruption.

I agree with you. The Telugu women are handsomer than the Tamils. They have fine eyes and more charm.

And so good night,

Yours,
Jawahar

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 7, pp. 530-531.

3. (1886-1949); a leading Congressman of Andhra Pradesh; joined noncooperation movement in 1920 and went to prison several times.

13. To Padmaja Naidu¹

Allahabad
23.10.36

How are you, my dear? In my crowded life my thoughts go to quiet and restful Pondicherry with the sound of the sea and you listening to it, all alone. From the crowds of the South I have transported myself to the crowds of the North and after a brief two days here I go to

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

Benares tomorrow morning—processions, meetings &c. In between there was some rest and sleep in the train. When I arrived here I found the house full of guests and a committee meeting in progress and the verandahs full of hungry looking persons—prospective candidates for the elections. Abdul Ghaffar has been here. We go together to Benares tomorrow.

Did I tell you that during one of my spells of sleepiness in the car Sam-bamoorty offered his pneumatic thigh to me for a pillow? A generous offer, but it put an end to my sleep.

I am not sure when I shall go to Calcutta. I shall decide in a day or two in Benares.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

14. To Padmaja Naidu¹

In train
Cuttack to Bhuvaneshwar
10.11.36

Dear eighteen-year-old—why should you be angry at your age? Hold on to it, nineteen comes too soon, and twenty and more. I suppose we might consider you nineteen in another week's time. I am afraid I do not feel paternally inclined towards you, but I am old, immeasurably old, and all the past ages oppress me and fill me. So old am I that often I love the sense of age, and agelessly I look at the passing show. "Very old are we men"² and echoes of the songs of Eve's nightingales rise in our hearts. And you are young, so young, though the wisdom of Eve looks through your eyes sometimes.

Foolishly I had hoped to meet you in Calcutta. Instead your letters reached me there.

Bidhan knew nothing of your programme, but said he would write to you to come to Calcutta. Will you go? And afterwards why not come to Allahabad, that very dull and unexciting place. December is your month there. I won't be there to trouble you too much, at any

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. This line occurs in the poem *All that's Past* by Walter de la Mare. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 7, p. 8.

rate, for long. Probably I shall return there on December 2nd and stay a few days and then go away and come back for two or three days.

Last night I left Calcutta and to break the long night I stopped at Kharagpur for an hour and addressed the railway workers. And then the train, reaching a wayside station in Orissa at 4.45 a.m. I have put in 160 miles by car since then and addressed six or seven meetings. Now I am going to Bhuvaneshwar where I hold forth again late at night.

Do not be alarmed. I feel singularly fresh and have been congratulated on my looks. Only a sleepiness creeps over me occasionally and my throat has become rather like the clergyman's, and a hoarse heavy voice emerges from it. It is very unlovely I am afraid and I think rather wistfully when a shy and almost girlish voice was mine. My hands too are limp and I cannot lean on them. Too much handshaking in the South has taken the stiffness out of them. They will recover.

Puri 11/11

This could not be continued last night. I send it as it is—I shall not have any time today.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

15. To Padmaja Naidu¹

In train to Vizagapatnam
12.11.36

My dear,

Last night I wanted to write to you, partly to show off for I had had a heavy day of 20 hours and I wanted to make an exhibition of my vitality. But not that only, for I thought that writing to you after the mad whirl of the day would soothe me. But I was wiser and decided not to break into the four hours of sleep that yet remained.

My last letter came to a sudden end—We reached Bhuvaneshwar at night and there was the inevitable procession by torchlight. I was too weary to argue and object and so I mounted a small country pony, a sweet little thing, and accompanied by music of a sort and dancing, I rode along the village streets. Flutes and tom-toms were being played

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

and very effective and athletic dancing, which I liked. It was rather like a village wedding procession, and suddenly the absurdity of the whole thing struck me and I laughed aloud. The dancing became more furious, they were bent on pleasing me.

After the meeting, although it was late and dark as pitch, I went to see the old ruined temples which are of great interest to archaeologists, a primitive arch specially. There I saw a beautiful image of Parvati in black granite.

At Puri also I went to the old temple and was taken to the sanctum where I was struck dumb with horror at the ugliness and frightfulness of the image. The whole place made me feel sick and I could hardly restrain myself from expressing my indignation and anger. Why this extreme reaction, I wondered. Was it at the crudeness of the whole thing, or the religious background, or my modernism, whatever that might be, or the Aryan reaction against Dravidian forms? Whatever it was due to, the Lord Jagannath did not find favour in my eyes, as Kali does not. Why should religion appear in such repulsive guise? It is bad enough without it.

I wanted to see the famous erotic sculptures in the temple but I had to hurry and what can one do with a multitude following one about? This crowd business is becoming a curse. Still I saw from some distance two of these sculptures and anything less suggestive I have seldom seen. Compared to the horror of the Jagannath image, it was purity itself.

Have you heard the Oriya women, or any other women, ululate (I believe that is the right word)? A strange eerie noise which sounded to me more like a wailing than anything else, and the way the tongue is made to roll and quiver and shake is quite extraordinary. Everywhere I went to in Orissa this sound greeted me. It is supposed to be very pleasing. I did not like it.

In your letter you expressed concern and horror at my getting wet during my last Andhra tour. Do you know that wetting was quite delightful and it woke up a drowsy person. But it had a more far-reaching result. For a month or more the district had suffered from a drought and in some parts water was even being sold. So the rain was exceedingly welcome and as it synchronised with my visit, my reputation is secure. All over the place I am sure to have brought the rain.

Calcutta after these long years was cordial. The procession was prodigious and excited Bengalis and others shouted and danced with excitement while I adopted the pose of the strong silent man, standing

at the back of the car, statuesque, immobile, almost expressionless. I loved to feel the contrast—how terribly vain I am!—and then the humour of it would make me laugh and suddenly thousands would laugh with me, and later grow more excited still. I am never tired of watching a crowd and playing upon its moods and a strange sense of kinship with it comes over me.

A greater triumph was the settlement we came to.² You who accuse me of temper will hardly believe the unbelievable patience and smiling tolerance I showed to all kinds of stupidity. Yet it was not that really worked in my favour. I bought that settlement and the price was the last two years of prison.³ It was worth it. What the future will bring I do not know but for the present Bengal is in a better frame of mind than it has been for ten years. The provincial groups have joined together and there is cooperation with All India.

I must say that I am myself astonished at the vitality I am showing in spite of my great age. I go on and on and the slight weariness passes soon enough. Almost it was as if some force was pushing me on, not Aurobindo, I am afraid. Like an arrow from the bow I shoot on and I do not know who the holder of the bow was. And the arrow has a bit of flame about it and while it lights others, it consumes itself. But it will last a while still and then one day it will end suddenly. That is the way I should like it to end—a snap and the light goes out. No slow fading out for me I hope. I think I am indifferent as to when this occurs. Life interests me greatly but it has ceased to hold me and so I can venture to play about with it, and when this occurs the burden seems to grow less. How foolishly people talk of sacrifice and suffering—Here I am a bundle of temper, pride and a great deal of carelessness, and I am held up as a model of the virtue of self-sacrifice. I really do not care what happens and yet, curiously enough, when I am doing a job I give all my thought to it, concentrate on it, and thus achieve results which would be denied to better and stronger men. Even the passage through a crowd makes me put all my concentrated thought and strength to it, and thus I succeed. How self-centred I am and I go on talking about myself, but you set me to it. Do not worry about me. I shall carry on for a long time yet—That is my fate, and then I shall snap and go on my last procession.

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 7, p. 554.

3. On 16 February 1934, Jawaharlal was sentenced to two years' simple imprisonment for three speeches delivered by him in Calcutta on 17-18 January 1934. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 6, pp. 227-238.

I shall be on the 18th at Allahabad and shall leave again on the 20th for north U.P.

Yours,
Jawahar

16. To Padmaja Naidu¹

In train to Raipur
14.11.36

My dear,

How to spend birth anniversaries. Here is a way of doing it. After a brief night at Tuni get up at 4.45 a.m. Congratulations from the household—photograph—leave Tuni soon after six by car. Nakkapali—meeting—local lacquer toys presented. Then on to Penugolanu Agraharam where Brahmin priests recite vedic verses in welcome—meeting, speech, etc. Yellamanchilli—Anakapalle—Chodavaram—Tummalapalli—Reddipalli—Agraharam—Vizianagaram. Meetings and speeches everywhere—addresses and sometimes odd presents. In one place I was informed that a local hall is being named “Jawahar Hall” in honour of the occasion. Short halts by the roadside where crowds waiting, apart from official meetings. Did 100 miles to Vizianagaram where food taken. Off again at 2 p.m. Gajapatinagaram—Salur—Bobbili. Crowds everywhere, meetings, etc.

At Bobbili an interesting incident. As our brief meeting was in progress two bands strike up with drum &c. within fifty yards. Impossible to speak. I get excited, jump down from the platform and rush up to the bands which have purposely performed to interfere with us. A crowd of Bobbili estate officials in evidence accompanied by a horde of ruffians. Two elephants approaching. I tell the bands to shut up and as they delay, I seize a drumstick and throw it away. The hooligans in the crowd with the estate officials surround me and look threatening—display fists. My temper goes up and we swear at each other, fortunately neither party understanding the other. The police appear and beg me to desist as they would deal with the situation. After a while I desist. The police stop the two bands, also prevent the elephants from disturbing our meeting. I return in triumph to the meeting and we

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

carry on. End of meeting—the whole affair lasting about 20 minutes. Motor on to Baljipeth. Road very bad but every village *en route* excited at our approach. Hordes of men and women lining the route. Within five miles of Baljipeth decide that it is too risky to go on as the time for my train approaching. We are told that a hundred thousand people waiting at Baljipeth. An exaggeration and doubt. Still ten or twenty thousand might have been there. Still can't afford to go on—Return *via* Bobbili. As we pass through Bobbili a sheaf of telegrams handed to us—one from Bebee. We go on to Parvatipuram. Meeting near station. Carry on till 8 p.m. when train comes in and meeting is ended and we hurry to station. Take train, wave good-bye to Andhra, and here I am.

A brief outline of a crowded day which included 200 miles by car.

The Andhra people grow upon me. I like their sturdy looking peasants. They are not of the mild and weak variety. The women are often attractive and graceful and have laughing eyes. I was surprised to find women and boys of 7 or 8 going about with long cheroots. Tobacco is grown here and these cheroots cost almost nothing. The leaves are gathered and rolled by each smoker. Black villainous looking cheroots they are.

One little incident rather touching. It had grown dark. A group of villagers were standing so we stopped. A girl lifted up a hurricane lantern to see inside our car. I stood up and saluted. Hurriedly she put down the lantern to return the salute. Our car started and then an old woman who was standing near this girl stretched out her arms and cried out (in Telugu, of course) : “My son, my son, let me see your face again!”

The birthday is not quite over yet. As I was waiting a crowd at a station demanded a ‘message’, and my tired throat performed again.

Today I sent you a telegram from Vizianagaram. It was a pretty useless message asking when you were leaving Pondicherry. I presume you have received two letters I sent to the Pondicherry address. Probably Bidhan Roy wrote to you to Pondicherry. He took your address from me and said he wanted you to go to Calcutta. Nellie Sen Gupta also took your address—the wrong one of course as it turns out.

What are your plans? Do you go to Calcutta?

Yours,
Jawahar

I hope this letter will improve your geography.

17. To Padmaja Naidu¹

Allahabad

13.12.36

My dear,

I have just been listening on the Berlin wireless to Beethoven's Kreutzer Sonata² and it has cooled my brain a little and brightened me up. I needed it. For latterly I have been growing duller and duller, heavy of body, dull of mind, slow of movement. I do not know if this has been a reaction to the last few months' intensive activity, or to other and less easily ascertainable causes. I dislike the idea of having to write the presidential address and I go on putting it off. It is going to be a flat thing this year. My mind is flat so how can I produce anything else. I suppose a holiday would do me good. And yet I wonder. Anyway there is no chance of it. I thought at one time that after the elections were over I would have a little free time but now we have fixed up another two months of heavy work and this carries us to April.

I think the elections must be responsible partly at least for my malaise, although I am only distantly connected with them. They coarsen everybody.

Perhaps I would cheer up and feel livelier if I saw you, but you are in far Hyderabad posing as the Buddha and I feel very unlike the Buddha. Because of that vast dissimilarity, I suppose, he draws me. Some time back I read a sonnet³ addressed to a Buddha statue—It was in a review—and some lines in it began to haunt me—

Nay, do not mock me with those carven eyes :

I too might grow, beneath that gaze of thine,
Desireless, immortal, unerringly wise,

Disdaining human dreams. Lo, by thy shrine
A multitude slow-worshipping still goes

Unsandalled, bearing perfumed offerings,

While down the avenues of time still flows

The splendid pageant of all timeless things.

Nay, do not mock me with that ecstasy,

Born of a peace abstracted from life's pain :

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. Beethoven's sonata for piano and violin. The last movement was composed by 1802, and was published in 1805.

3. Written by E.H. d'Alvis, a Sinhalese Buddhist.

Love and its futile dream shall trouble me
 Too briefly—I shall find myself again;
 And look on thee unpassioned, mute, alone,
 An agelessness invincible in stone.

Desireless, immortal, unerringly wise, disdaining human dreams—how the words gripped my mind, and while I disliked them—I was drawn to them. No, I had no desire to be desireless, immortality seemed an infinity of sorrow and trouble and labour without purpose or end, and the wisdom that never erred rather frightened me; and what would life be without dreams? And yet I gazed at my Buddha picture, fascinated, held by the power of that desirelessness. But I must not weary you. You will come to Faizpur. Will you not? This Congress, I feel certain, is going to be a terribly dull affair. It is overwhelmed by the elections.

Nan is away electioneering in Cawnpore. Ranjit spends the day in some remote villages. I have insisted on having this week here with only a few odd engagements in the neighbourhood. In January I shall spin about from place to place asking people to vote for a curious assortment of people—damnable job this asking for votes. But January is far off. There is December still, and Faizpur and the sight of you then!

Love,

Yours,
 Jawahar

I have been trying to get that photograph of Tagore's and mine but Calcutta people are so frightfully inefficient.

18. To Padmaja Naidu¹

Chhindwara
 Dec. 31st, 1936

Bebee,

Eight meetings—a train journey—and 130 miles by car, that is the record for today. The last 80 miles by car were through a thick forest, a winding road with innumerable turns and twists and ups and downs. It must be a beautiful drive by day but we passed through the forest in the

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

darkness and could only sense the beauty of it. Mostly I was dozing. It was cold.

The Faizpur Congress was a novel experience for me. It was almost a holiday in spite of occasional hard work. I had no feeling of tension and little of worry. How far were you responsible for it, I wonder! Certainly to some extent. But circumstances favoured the mood. Also I feel that I am gradually losing that intensity which I once possessed. Through sheer habit I can work with concentration but my mind is not consumed quite so much as it used to be with a single purpose obsession. Is that due to age or a wider outlook or a growing habit of introspection? I told you of it. It worries me a little.

My mind wanders from the day's work and I begin to think of the time when I shall meet you again. When will it be? Already I look forward to the day when this election business is over and I have a rest from incessant touring. And yet, it is quite possible that I might feel bored if I stayed too long in one place.

You are not irritated with me? I feel that you are not really but a little doubt sometimes creeps into my mind. What curious bits of humanity we are, with a thousand aspects like Krishna! Being, as you know, enormously egotistical, I am always trying to understand and analyse some of these various aspects of myself. I suppose the realisation of this egotism itself tones down the offence. Certain aspects of my nature have inevitably been starved these many years in prison. At the same time others have no doubt developed. And so the starved ones call for food, the others do not deliberately interfere but they create inevitably those bars of the spirit which are solidier than iron. And even when I peep through these bars, I can never forget them or myself, howsoever I try to do so. That is my fate. And perhaps it is as well. Even my fits of temper are immediately followed by a tightening of the reins.

How odd we all are. I am getting more and more interested in understanding this oddness of individuals, including myself. But as you wisely and truly informed me, I am an ignoramus where women are concerned.

It is getting on to midnight. The old year is passing and my mind goes back to twelve months ago, New Year's eve. Did I not write to you then?² It was a dismal eve for me and the snow that covered the hill-sides that I loved so well, reminded me of death, cold death, fair to see but distant, far away, incomprehensible, hateful.

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 12, pp. 692-693.

The New Year is coming in. May happiness and good fortune attend you, my dear, and me also (why should I not wish these good things to myself?).

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

19. To Padmaja Naidu¹

Allahabad
2-1-37

So I must not be weak-minded. And you dare to tell me so when your eyes betray you and your written word gives a different and contrary message. And what are the dear little poems that you send but an invitation to stray from the cold and chilly path along which the strong in mind walk in lonely grandeur? Am I strong-minded? I do not know. But I do know that behind the mask of a pale set face, all manner of desires and fantasies and urges disturb the surface of my mind, sometimes clear and definite, oftener vague and elusive and strange; that the strength I show is not far removed from weakness, as laughter is so near akin to tears; that my courage might well turn to cowardice; that even my pride is often a cloak for an inner humility. You do not believe that, do you? But then I am a stranger to you as you are to me and as all of us are to each other, and the nearer we grow to each other, the more we discover strangeness and unfathomed depths. We only know our acquaintances, for there knowledge is but superficial; we never get to know our friends and those who are dear to us.

To demonstrate my weak-mindedness I sit down to write to you when mountains of papers await my consideration, and I am supposed to rush off an article for a new weekly in London, and a preface for a book which is held up in London because of me. But I knew it would be little use my trying to do other work for my mind would wander and probably you would creep unconsciously into the article and the preface. And so to be rid of you for a while I am writing.

What shall I write to you about Ajanta? It seems almost vulgar and profane to use foolish words of praise which have been so cheapened

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

in the market place. The joy of seeing these pictures of long ago almost becomes a pain, to see beauty of form and beauty of life that are unattainable, unrealisable. What manner of people were they who created this dream world out of a few colours and lines? What was the texture of their lives—how rich it must have been! How can one forget the Bodhisattva even after seeing a picture—and the lovely women of Ajanta. I wish one did forget for they disturb.

During all my recent wanderings one fact has impressed me. The beauty of Indian women, especially in the villages, has surprised me. In spite of all the poverty and squalor, they stand out and one cannot pass them without looking again.

I loved the sight of the envelope that brought your letter. I read it and then a feeling of loneliness took possession of me and I have found it difficult to get rid of it. Weak-mindedness.

A strange thing happened this evening. My mother casually mentioned, but with suppressed rage, that my name was being coupled with that of Devika Rani's²! She had never heard of her but somebody told her that a newspaper contained this item of news. I was rather tickled and I thought at first that this was the usual pleasant Indian way of making insinuations. Probably because the incident of her garlanding me had been shown on the screen here recently. Soon I discovered that it was not Devika Rani—A telegram came from an Urdu rag in Lahore: "Our Allahabad correspondent wires you likely marry some socialist girl. Marriage to be performed under Civil Marriage Act. May I release the news?"

I was irritated. Someone came to see me from the city and on enquiry I found that the news was being talked about. A new Hindi paper—less than a week old—had given currency to it in the confident expectation that it would help in its circulation!

I have just received another telegram from Lahore—from *The Tribune*—asking for confirmation. So probably many newspapers must have received it and some are bound to publish it. Perhaps you may read it even before you get this.

I feel tired and sleepy. My mind is disturbed and I can't do any work tonight. It is as well that I am going off to Behar day after tomorrow morning. For six weeks I shall only have weariness of body to contend

2. (b. 1914); film producer and actress, now retired; grand-niece of Rabindranath Tagore and wife of the well-known producer, Himansu Rai; after his death in 1940 she married the distinguished Russian artist, Svetoslav Roerich.

against and the ceaseless round from early morning to late night will prevent the mind from straying.

My love to you,

Yours,
Jawahar

20. To Padmaja Naidu¹

Meerut District
In running car
22-1-37

My dear, I am reduced to such straits, I have to write in a car racing along. Time has become such a precious commodity that one must seize it where one can. Whether you will be able to read this I do not know. But it can't be much more illegible than your writing is occasionally!

Yesterday I received your letter in Agra and I read it as I was rushing past Fatehabad where Aurangzeb defeated Dara Shikoh. I felt like writing to you last night but I was strong-minded—or was it weak-mindedness? I succumbed to the Taj and went there late at night and tried to forget politics and election in the pale moonlight. But you followed me there and distracted my mind and got rather mixed up with the moonlight and the Taj. I hurried back at midnight to catch a train.

Do not worry about the foolish tears that came to my eyes at Faizpur. Tears are not so rare for me as most people, including you, seem to imagine. You may yet discover me as I might you, but I imagine that the more we discover each other, the more strange depths and unknown regions we shall find. Not in you and me only but in all of us. Human personality has fascinated me and I took to the study of psychology and psycho-analysis because of this fascination. What devils and angels we all are, hopelessly mixed up together. And the knowledge of this fact makes one a little more tolerant, a little humbler (a quality, you will tell me, I sadly lack), and there again you will be wrong as in so many things about me. You have built up an idealized picture of me and you are surprised when it does not fit in with reality. I then you rush to the other extreme and suffer pain and are distressed. I am

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

not that idealized picture and I am not as bad as you might sometimes have thought me. I have enough of the devil in me, and it is that perhaps that drives me on, but the angel is there also to curb it and subdue it.

I told you once that sometimes faintly I felt almost capable of murder. Perhaps that was exaggerated for I can't quite conceive myself doing it whatever the provocation. But that faint sub-conscious feeling makes me understand the murderer. I have no horror of him as I have of the worm-like species of human beings.

And so we swing about from one extreme to another, innumerable personalities tied up together, showing each other at different times and surprising our friends and lovers. Others do not see these changing facets for the mask is on. Be warned therefore and do not be unduly alarmed if you see the devil in me, or even the beast. On the whole I think (conceit!) I possess rather less of the beast than most people. But there is enough of the devil. A fortunate chance yoked that devilry to public action which has brought me credit, and yet a little twist and I would have had a mountain of discredit.

What do I know about myself? Little enough. I am, as I suppose others are, a helpless vehicle of strange forces and urges which push us along the road of destiny. Yet I would master that destiny. And in my endeavour to do that, I am unthinkingly hard and cruel to others for they pass from my mind and I forget them utterly for a while. Those I love have to suffer most for they attribute all manner of motives to this sudden forgetfulness. It is not my love that wavers but another overmastering passion or obsession that.....

(I had to stop suddenly as I arrived at my destination. It was a big meeting and I held forth—felt frightfully sleepy—could hardly keep my eyes open even though my lips were moving. Now I am writing on.)

So the earthly paradise fades away and even while I hold the loved one in my arms my mind wanders away and forgets the present and I become a stranger from another land. I return but it is difficult to capture the old mood—the charm is broken and I look on detached, as through iron bars, on two beings, one being myself. I try to be friendly but friendship is a distant affair. Sometimes the mood returns.

And you, stranger, who are you? I do not know, but I know that I like to see you and be near you and hear your voice, and touch you and to look at your radiant smile. Is that not enough for me? Must I go deeper still? Whether I will or not, unknown depths reveal themselves, and sometimes they please and sometimes they trouble.

I do not know if I have written any sense. The car moves along at 50 miles an hour. The road is fairly good and so I have written. My mind lingers on you and I feel refreshed at the thought — But also I long to see you.

Do not play tricks in your bath or elsewhere. Have some consideration at least for the young doctors that have to attend on you. And remember that you have to produce a Buddha.

Jawahar

Roorkee — 12.45 a.m.

I am tired — the day's work is over. It begins afresh at 4.30 a.m. for I have to catch a train at 5. What a life I lead! This evening my thoughts suddenly went to the rest and quiet of a prison cell. Yesterday an Englishman at Agra remarked that if I could exert myself to this extent for a cause which did not appeal to me much (elections) what would I do for something I was keen about.

Here is the latest *bon mot*² from Paris? *On ne baldwine³ pas avec l'amour* — a parody of Moliere's title '*On ne badine pas avec l'amour*.'⁴

Love to you my dear

J.

2. Epigram.

3. Pun on the word badine meaning 'jest'; Stanley Baldwin was Prime Minister of England at this time.

4. One does not jest with love.

21. To Padmaja Naidu¹

In Train
7-2-37

Why have you not written to me, my dear? For days I was thinking of my return to Allahabad and of a letter from you bringing me news of you. But when I came nothing from you awaited me and I looked again and again through the piles of letters. How are you now? The question is a silly one for I do not know how your answer can reach me, at any rate, during the next ten or twelve days when I shall be

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

moving about continuously. I do not even know where I am going except vaguely — Maharashtra and the Karnatak. On the 10th morning I take plane to Cannanore from Bombay.

I am very tired and my body aches and my eyes smart and yet there is no escape from this mad round and you are far far away and I seek solace in vain. But I grow impatient. Elections end like other things and ever your dear self may be visible and approachable some time or other. Meanwhile, I shall think of the Bodhisattva of Ajanta

Yours,
Jawahar

22. To Padmaja Naidu¹

Kumtu
Karnatak
12-2-37
1 a.m.

My dear, how you fill my mind! When I ought to be thinking of something else your image creeps in unawares through some window and upsets the train of my thought. Bad, is it not? I am getting terribly weak-minded and the desire to see you grows strong. As you are not likely to come my way for some time I might have to journey to Calcutta. How or when I do not quite know. Being a Political Personage, my movements have a certain political significance whatever the intention might be. And so often enough I have to submit to this tyranny of public life. Still I might turn up. For the next week I am touring about Karnatak and Maharashtra. The staff work here is bad, thoroughly bad, and the strain is correspondingly great. I was due to arrive here at 6 p.m. People gathered at 3 p.m. to be in good time to have a look at me. They were in better time than they imagined for I turned up exactly at midnight. The day's programme included my crossing the Ghats this evening—a long journey—but that has had to be postponed to tomorrow. The living arrangements are also peculiar. Last night we stayed in a protected monument, an interesting and picturesque place, but hardly suitable for human habitation.

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

I met your mother in Bombay for a short while. I was surprised & pleased to find how well she had borne her long journeys during her tour.

I return to Allahabad on the 18th morning to record my vote for the Council (Upper Chamber) election. For the other election (Provincial Assembly), I failed to perform my civic duty being away from Allahabad on the crucial day.

I am frightfully sleepy — and so to bed —

Yours,
Jawahar

23. To Padmaja Naidu¹

Allahabad
Feb. 19, 1937

My dear, You are right — I should not go to Bengal. I would do no good to anybody and I would get entangled in the web of Bengal intrigues. I would see you of course—a fleeting glimpse—and would regret having to dash away. Nor should you come to Allahabad unless you feel much better. I was selfish in suggesting it. Being myself unused to illness I forget it in others. Your job is to get well and you must choose the best place for that. Come to Delhi if you want to see a big *tamasha*² and if you are fitter. I am not somehow looking forward to it. Or perhaps it is just a reaction after continuous strain. But I think it is something more — this crowd of indifferent legislators does not attract me. I saw enough of them in the hatching stage and they were not good to look at, barring a few.

Vasant Panchami has always been a special day for me — it has so many memories and associations. And though spring may come in all its rich glory, it is tinged with sadness. Almost it taunts. I spent the day in a car of course but I remembered it. I was in the Karnatak with its semi-tropical forests and I almost felt inclined to play the truant, rush away from my car and meetings, and lose myself in the

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. The reference is to the All India Convention of Congress Legislators held in Delhi on 19 March 1937. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 8, pp. 59-71.

forest. But discipline prevailed. Not quite though for later in the day I behaved quite abominably, to a greatly respected but very foolish person.

Karnatak tried me hard. As a grand finale of my tour there, it kept me on the move for 24 hours continuously from 7 a.m. the next day! All day and all night we had meetings, huge concourses of people, and I reached Maharashtra just in time to start the next day. Don't be alarmed and don't send me too much good advice as to what I should do and should not do. I have felt remarkably fresh during this tour and my weariness has been a passing one only. Why this should be so is amazing but it is so. A friend who knows me well attended a meeting late in the evening after a heavy day. He came to dole out sympathy expecting to find me in the last stages of collapse. Instead I tired him out by a fairly vigorous speech lasting nearly one hour, and he confessed that I looked as if I had just come from a rest cure. I have felt far more tired in the past after a week's tour than I do now after three months. Whether this vitality is due to Aurobindo's astral messages or you I do not know.

My eyes seem weary and are weary. But they show this far more when I am more or less passive and resting. That weariness has nothing to do with physical effort. It is old, very old, and it creeps into the eyes when the fever of action passes. It is the burden of thought and fantasy and regret and the might have beens. Will I get rid of it if I go to Khali? We are old friends — what would I do without it? Perhaps in the old days, long long ago, when I had a soft girlish face and rather shy ways, I did not have it. But that person died long ago and another took its place, hard and set and ever growing harder. I have escaped cynicism so far and so the hardness has not become unbearable, and, fortunately for me, others have given me a halo which hides much they would not admire. Have you not done so yourself, you silly girl who are apparently so wise? You are a nineteen-year old, and do not forget it, and you have the delightful illusions of that age. And I? A hundred or more. Will I ever know how much you love me? No I shall not, nor will you. Nobody knows, nobody can know, for it is changing, variable stuff, mocking us and eluding us, self-willed and vagrant. How can one know it or measure it? Was it turn of head, touch of hand? Strange this very way love began, I as little understand love's decay. How foolish it is to talk of it even. Where the apple reddens, never pry.

I shall go to Wardha on the 25th and expect to be back on the 1st or 2nd March. On the 6th or 7th I have to be in Lucknow. For the rest I expect to remain in Allahabad till I go to Delhi. The dates for

the A.I.C.C. and the Convention have not been fixed yet finally. Probably the various shows will begin about the 18th.

Indu is likely to be back here in the second week of April.

Yours,
Jawahar

24. To Padmaja Naidu¹

In running train
Bombay-Calcutta Mail
March 2, 1937

My dear, Yesterday the air was thick with rumours of my arrest and internment or trial. Even Reuters telephoned up from Bombay to Wardha to Jamnalalji to enquire if I was still there. My mind told me that this was highly unlikely at the present juncture, and yet my instincts worked differently and seemed to accept such a happening, and instincts are stronger than the logic of the mind. So I started thinking of all the odd jobs that remained undone, of the many strings that I held in my hand, of the loose threads that had to be tied up. What would happen to all these? And then, rather suddenly, I seemed to drift away from these thoughts and present-day tasks; an unusual detachment came upon me and I became an onlooker on this Indian scene where others were functioning; distantly I saw them and behind them great impersonal forces at work. The walls of the prison house seemed to close in around me and my life and activities were confined by them. What books shall I read, what shall I write? How I had neglected these books during this past year and they looked at me with reproachful eyes from my shelves. I must have poetry for it brings me peace So my thoughts wandered while Jamnalalji and others were talking to me somewhat excitedly. My answers to them were hardly to the point for I had almost forgotten them and my immediate surroundings.

I do not know what will happen, which will prove correct — my mind or my instincts. I do not very much care. I have had a long rope and within a few days it will be just a year since I came back. In any

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

event I shall have to go, whether it is a day or a week or a month or more. So why should I trouble myself?

I do not know when or where I shall meet you again. Probably we shall meet soon at Delhi. But whether we meet or not soon I shall think of you. I am so happy that you are out of the wood and are marching along the straight road to health.

My love to you,

Yours,
Jawahar

25. To Padmaja Naidu¹

Harijan Colony
Delhi
16-3-37

Bebee, Your note induces me to send this letter in reply. Otherwise I would not have dared to write in contravention of my promise, however much I might have wanted to do so. I want to hold to that promise. I do not blame myself and of course there can never be any question of blaming you. It is little good thinking in terms of blame. Things happen despite us. Only I am sorry, dreadfully sorry, that I should have been the cause of pain and sorrow to you. And for that I cannot forgive myself. Life has such a damnable way of playing tricks with us, and those whose happiness counts most for us, we manage to cause the greatest sorrow.

Perhaps I may see you during the next few days. Of course if we meet we shall do so as friends, and if we part we shall still I hope be friends. But the weather is a difficult subject for me to talk about to anyone, least of all to you. Gradually I have shed the social graces, such as I possessed, and I realise painfully that I am not fit company for anyone. This has long been so, as you know, but latterly my nerves are always on edge and it is only with a strong effort that I keep myself together — not always — I am afraid my attempt at friendly conversation may not be a success. Just at present I would not quite trust myself in your company. Once you saw tears in my eyes. I do not want to repeat that experience and cause you pain again. Perhaps in another

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

day or two I might be able to pull myself together. Today it was difficult for me to carry on with the Working Committee meeting for your picture filled my mind and your sad eyes disturbed me and I forgot what was happening around me.

The gods have been good to me — why should I complain? And yet the tricks they play, and in the midst of plenty they starve, and in the middle of a crowd, they make one feel desolatingly lonely.

I have written more than I intended. Forgive me. That is why I do not want to see you or write to you. But whether I write to you or not, you will always have my good wishes. May good fortune and happiness attend you.

Jawahar

It is just a year ago, almost to a day, that I met you in Shankarlal's² house in New Delhi on my return from Europe.

A card is being sent to you for the A.I.C.C. and Convention.

2. (1901-1951); a leading industrialist and prominent citizen of Delhi, and a patron of art and music; was president of the Punjab Chamber of Commerce and vice-president of the Delhi Municipal Committee.

26. To Padmaja Naidu¹

Allahabad

26-3-37

Bebie, I have spent the greater part of the day in sorting and arranging the mountain of letters that have been waiting for me here. They have been neatly and methodically arranged (being a foolish woman, you cannot of course appreciate this kind of thing) in different files A.B. &c. in a descending scale of importance. Having done so, and felt virtuous thereat, for method had triumphed and strong-mindedness prevailed, I felt that answering them might well be left to a future occasion — And so the files have been put away and I sit down to write this least important of my letters. It finds no place in a file and it is not in response to another. If it is a pointless letter you will not mind, for there is too much pointedness about me already to your task and mine. What am I to write to you, I do not quite know, and why should

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

I write if I have nothing pertinent to say? But the desire to write has been strong within me and I have played with it for these last two or three days, and questioned it, and even (horrible thought!) analysed it! The strong and silent man (alas! not so very silent) was at work and he wanted to know what all this potter was about. He knew the answer well enough but he has a role to play, and he cannot forget it even in the privacy of his thought. What an awful companion he is, and how often I have felt like rebelling against his tyranny. But, to be truthful, the poor chap is not so tyrannous after all, and the strength oozes out of him often enough and only an outer shell, hardened by wind and weather, remains to delude the ignorant and the shortsighted. To give in to a temptation is after all the best way of overcoming it and, I am afraid, I am getting less and less used to resisting temptations. Spoilt, you will say of course. Nothing of the kind. But I am in danger of being spoilt and I am in the mood to allow myself to be spoilt.

I have seldom felt quite so unpolitical as I did after return from Delhi. Even the desire to read the daily papers was not strong. After a year's messing about, suddenly I felt as if I had nothing particular or very important to do. Others were shouldering the burden, such as it was, and I was almost out of the picture. That brought relief and detachment but also a measure of *ennui*. I did not quite know what to do with myself. Of course there were crowds of things to do — letters, visitors, enquiries, business, trunk telephone calls every few minutes — but nothing seemed very important. I was a looker-on.

Tired, you will say. Perhaps. But it is something more than that. I think I am growing and growth at 47 is a curiously disturbing affair. But I am certainly tired mentally and if I was wise I would take your advice and run away. If I do not do so deliberately soon I may have to do it at the wrong moment and forcibly. I think I shall go somewhere in April. If Indu had not been coming I might have gone sooner, but now I suppose I must hold on for another three or four weeks. And then? Few days or a fortnight — I feel in the mood for disappearing for a year.

Fantasies. How can one get rid of the coils that bind, and there is no peace here or elsewhere, only conflict and struggle. I told you that Gerald Heard & Aldous Huxley had decided to leave England & Europe and go to America because Europe was too full of war & the psychology of war. As if they will get peace in America.

It seems that conflict will grow here. All the king's horses and all the king's men cannot stop it, nor the high-minded seekers after conversion.

How are you getting on, my dear, and do you grow in strength from day to day? The picture of you fills my mind and I wonder when it will materialise again, and I wonder also if, in spite of all my conceit and seeming hardness, you are not the stronger of the two. Or is it that we are all weaklings, tossed hither and thither by a blind fate?

Did you get the snake charmer? I impressed on Indra² to produce one and he promised faithfully to do so. Did he keep his promise?

When will you leave Delhi and where will you go from there? Idle questions, and you need not answer them, for I suppose you do not know yourself.

My love to you, my dear,

Yours,
Jawahar

2. Indra Vidyavachaspati of Delhi.

27. To Padmaja Naidu¹

Allahabad
28-3-37

How you love me, Bebee! I am astonished at the depth of your affection for me. Not that I doubted it, but still I am touched, moved, impressed and elated at this final testimony. These thoughts come to me when I see the evidence of the enormous labour you have spent on revising my *Glimpses of World History*. I had seen your copious notes and corrections previously, but it is only recently that I have looked at them with a critical eye and realised what you must have gone through in reading or re-reading that enormous pile. Since yesterday I have spent three hours over the wretched thing, these hateful and exhausting hours, and all I have succeeded in doing is to revise indifferently and unsatisfactorily 30 pages. At this rate I should mortgage a few months to this terrible business.

Is there anything more hateful than this revising business? And yet my task is lightened tremendously by what you have done. How carefully you have gone through the book. Surely you deserve part of the royalties, that is if any are forthcoming. For months and months I

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

have avoided this revision partly for lack of time but chiefly because of an aversion for it. But now I must do it for the publisher waits for it and conceit of an author to see his book again in print in a new garb urges me on. It is proposed to issue the book in the Penguin series in 4 volumes — maps and illustrations by Horrabin. I like the idea of a really cheap edition although authors don't make much out of these 6d. editions.

Your corrections have drawn my attention to so many of my lapses and errors that you have shaken my confidence in my own writing. I am adopting most of them — not all. Of course your way is the more polished way but sometimes I feel that the polish is at the expense of vividness and a certain simplicity and strength.

Sometimes I think with amused surprise of the way I have developed, almost incidentally and casually, into an author. Having experienced some of the joys and successes of authorship, I am now having my full share of the worries. Just think of it — I have to deal with a score of publishers, including those who are bringing out translations in India. And the complications that are continually arising are damnable. It is a full-time job to keep pace with them. Surely an author should not have to put up with this clerkly drudgery. Leaving out the slow and incompetent Indian publishers of translations, I have to deal with John Lane, Allen and Unwin, the Penguin Book Co., the Receiver and Liquidators of John Lane, the purchasers of John Lane's business, and now solicitors! Krishna Menon seems to be bent on dragging me to a law court in the vain hope of realising my lost royalties on the *Auto* and there is nothing I hate so much as figuring as a litigant in a law court. And against whom? My own publisher. Then there are complicated questions of royalties and the rights of my Indian publishers to be adjusted with those of the Penguin Book Co. What a complex world this is. I like coming to quick decisions and generally I do so, but when others and third parties are concerned I become helpless. Each party wants a little more than his pound of flesh. I have just been writing long air mail letters and I am full of this business and so I have unburdened myself on you.

I am supposed to be a busy politician but this sideline grows and I do not know where it will land me.

What charm have you got that works on me and makes me think of you so much? And the thought of you pleases me greatly and yet it produces a sense of emptiness. You are so far and distant. Are you frightened of me? Or is it that you are frightened of yourself as I am often enough of myself? I wonder. Anyway you are a darling.

Jawahar

Indra writes to me that in spite of every effort he failed to discover a snake charmer.

28. To Padmaja Naidu¹

Allahabad
April 1st 1937
Hartal Day

My dear one, For two days I have had the unusual experience, for me, of having fever and I have been forced to lie down and keep to bed and yet the fever continues. A few days back I was almost wishing that some touch of bodily ill-health should drive me to bed and rest. My wish found rapid fulfilment and now I am bored and irritated. This is not a fit condition for me to be in to welcome Indu. She must be somewhere in the Grecian Isles and soon enough she will alight at Bamrauli, the airport of Allahabad. If she does not see me there she is bound to think with a shock that I have been arrested. This fear has haunted her and, although she will be enlightened soon enough, I should like to prevent that initial shock. I suppose I shall manage to go to the aerodrome. I am just returning from an outing — I could not keep away. It was the Hartal Day meeting and it seemed a gross submission to the weakness of the physical frame for me to be absent. So I went and spoke for a few minutes — only a few minutes! — and returned immediately — When I went my temperature was nearly 103°F. On my return it was under 102°F. So you see that normality for me is a public meeting and not rest in bed —

What shall I write to you about your letters, my darling? Three of them have come, all enlighteningly dated March 1937. The first one brought about an immediate reaction of 'how dare you'? Why should you grow morbid and self-effacing and so apologetic? And yet that was a foolish reaction. For you had to write it and I had to read it. Even if you had not written it so, I would have sensed that feeling somewhere, for we are too fond of each other not to realise instinctively what ails the other. It is true that I am extraordinarily dense sometimes and my self-centredness comes in the way of my understanding others. But not you — Here something else comes in the way, something which is the opposite of self-centredness. I may not and cannot be objective where you are concerned — You move me too much.

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

Do you realise that, in spite of my conceit, I feel sometimes in the same way towards you? What gifts do I bring to a laughing eighteen-year old? I grow harder as the days go by and laughter is a rare companion. I am frightened by this and by my loneliness. And yet I have a curious and abiding sense of growth within me and this, I suppose, gives me a flair of youth in spite of my physical appearance.

Of course you are shy of me and I am a little shy of you — Why should I be surprised at something which seems to be inevitable. Are we not mysteries to each other, even though we know each other pretty well?

Nothing that comes from your heart or mind will anger me or irritate me. And so you must not think in terms of words of yours having that effect on me. Am I so very reticent or inclined to understate-ment? Others do not think so — Nor does the pagan in me think so or behave so. But perhaps it is true that in the matter of personal relations I am a little reticent, till the barriers go, and even then perhaps. But I love you to write to me freely and spontaneously, forgetting what effect it will have on me. It will have the best of effect.

There is one other small matter which perhaps makes me reticent in my letters and that is the certainty that prying eyes see all my letters. I have nothing to hide but there are some things which are not meant for strangers. You write to me that you received my last two letters within a few hours of each other. As a matter of fact they were written with an interval of two days.

I feel a little tired. Not at writing this curious jumble of a letter, for the thought of you vitalizes me. But the outing and the meeting were an effort and I suppose I had better sleep this out. My love to you, *carissima* —

Jawahar

29. To Padmaja Naidu¹

Ekma

6-5-37

And so the train rolled away taking your dear self with it and the station seemed lonely and desolate. The evening was a long one, partly broken

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

into by my carrying out one of your behests. I bought a new pair of *Peshawari chappals*. I do not like them nearly as much as my old ones, but that is the way of persons approaching fifty! We get used to old things, old ways, old persons. I have made one great exception to this in favour of one particular person. Is that not enough and more than enough?

It was good that I had to leave Allahabad the next day. I busied myself with all manner of jobs in the office and at home—pretty useless, come to think of it, but they filled my time and that was something. The journey began badly. At Howrah an enthusiastic youth fell between the train and the platform and had his foot cut off. It was a ghastly sight, and yet in spite of his pain he clung to me, pleased to see me, and wanted to put his head on my feet. I liked his face and this face of his and his foot blurred the sight of Calcutta all day. The next day soon after our ship started a man jumped overboard and the ship had to turn round and go back part of the way to Calcutta to search for him in the Hooghly. We did not find him. They say that he was a Russian suspect—probably a man dealing in cocaine or some other dope—and he had been refused entry into India. So he was being taken back to Rangoon. People who saw him say that he appeared to be doped himself and was in a kind of daze. And that was the end of him.

Apart from these distressing incidents the voyage has been good. I have slept a good deal and fed and indulged in deck games with the officers—there are very few passengers. We have the honour of sitting at the Captain's table and this means that a great deal of time is taken up by him. I have hardly read, though I have written a large number of official and semi-official letters. Deck games, at the instance of the Captain, have absorbed a great deal of time and all my body, and Indu's, are aching by this unwanted exercise. This morning we spent a long time on the bridge with the Captain explaining the mysteries of his craft.

There are few passengers I said. Not so on deck for there is a host of deck passengers sprawling in a narrow, evil-looking space. And yet I am told that this is a light load. I felt almost sick at seeing all these people closely huddled up together in unhealthy and insanitary conditions.

We approach Rangoon. Within a few hours we shall be there. It came to me almost as a shock the other day to realise that I had never been east of Calcutta. All the great eastern world was unknown to me and I had wrapped myself up in India & Europe. A kind of mental adjustment took place within me and Indian politics and even European affairs receded into the background. Subconsciously I became receptive

to the new world that I was entering. Not that Burma is much of a new world but it came to represent the Far East and all it stands for. I think I shall go to Singapore. This East calls me and the nearer I can approach it the better. I am glad I came out of India. No hill station could have given me the psychological relief that foreign countries give.

It is getting on to midnight. Soon after four I have to be up to be ready for a very early landing. My love to you, my darling one.

Yours,
Jawahar

30. To Padmaja Naidu¹

s.s. Karos
May 22, 1937

Darling, It is so long since I have had news of you. Where are you? How are you? I feel so terribly cut off from almost everything and everybody. Even the newspapers in Burma conspired to this end for they were utterly bad. You will remember asking me to send you cuttings from them about my tour. I did not think this worthwhile. But on second thoughts I have collected, with Indu's help, some such cuttings and one or two bundles will be sent to you by ordinary post from Penang. Rangoon possesses three dailies in English—two Anglo-Indian and one more or less loyalist Indian—and a paper (Indian) which comes out three times a week. I am sending you cuttings chiefly from the two Indian papers as their reports were longer. From the Anglo-Indian papers there are some editorial notes. One from the *Rangoon Times* you might find interesting, or at any rate it should convince you, if you have any lingering doubts on this subject, about my inherent greatness. Which reminds me that on my last day in Rangoon I delivered, according to my own thinking, a very good address on socialism and the world situation.² I wish it was better reported.

What a time we had in Burma rushing about all over the country! Most of this journeying was done by air, by sea planes. They have regular services of these as the numerous waterways make journeys by road or train long and tedious. We covered a good part of Burma but

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 9, pp. 652-654.

inevitably it was all a succession of crowds and processions and big functions. Individual contacts could hardly be made with success under these conditions. Yet I made some good contacts. I saw a good deal of the Burmese but I would have liked to see them more. I was always trying to get out of purely Indian surroundings, usually with little success. These Indians (and it is extraordinary how many there are in Burma) grew quite excited over me. I suppose when people live away from their country the sense of their own country grows. Latterly there has been friction between Indians and Burmans and this has disheartened the Indians and given them ever more the sense of alienness. My visit suddenly gave them strength and self-reliance. Because of the glory and greatness that they imagined in me, they felt bigger in stature. Was not this man, almost like unto a god (don't laugh—This is no conceit. I am trying to give expression to their feelings) one of their own kind—very far and above them certainly and yet very near, one of themselves? And if one of them could be so great, why surely they themselves were not so low after all. And so I became a symbol to them of themselves, of what they might be, and in honouring me, they honoured themselves. They, the Indians, grew hysterical over it, not only the workers but the middle class folk. The Burmese welcomed me more sedately but often they were influenced and swept away a little by the Indians' enthusiasm.

What a curious and lovable people are the Burmese. I like them and yet I suppose I would tire of them if I had to stay long. They are not mature enough and one cannot always live with children, delightful as they are. Unfortunately their contacts with Indians have not been happy. They have come across the 'coolie' class, which has a lower standard of life than they have, and they have despised him. They have also come into contact with the money-lending class and they have disliked him and been afraid of him. The Indians in Burma, culturally speaking, are a poor lot. They do not make good ambassadors. Marwaris, Chettiars, Gujratis, all very estimable people no doubt, but they do not impress, and they are much too busy money making to think of the other aspects of life. The Burman, on the other hand, is full of these other aspects, or at any rate of some of the more superficial of them. He is rather superficial. He looks down somewhat on the Indian and calls him by unsavoury names. But even this has something of an inferiority complex about it.

Indira & I left Rangoon thoroughly exhausted by our labours. I had a cold, bad throat and cough and you might have spotted the dark rings round my eyes. Indu had trouble with her tonsils and ran a slight temperature. We have both improved by three days' rest on board.

I was forgetting to tell you that I have tasted the *durian* fruit. I was thoroughly prepared for its evil smell and determined to taste it in spite of it. I had however expected an agreeable taste. I was thoroughly disappointed and it was as much as I could do not to make a face at it. I desisted after the first spoonful. Indu had even less and decided she had had enough of it. Upadhyaya felt almost sick and could not get over it the whole day. I was told that the *durian* I had tasted was not of the best quality. So I determined to have another try and some days later at Moulmein, which is known for its *durians*, I had another taste of it. This time it was slightly better but I doubt if I shall ever try it again. Indu and Upadhyaya refused to taste it again. So we have another of our illusions shattered.

I visited a monastery in Rangoon and had a talk, through an interpreter, with the abbot. He asked me a curious question—how far was Allahabad from Gaya? He told us that according to the scriptures only those could attain Buddhahood who were born within 300 *yojanas* (which I am told approximate to miles) of Gaya. Apparently he was calculating my chances of attaining Buddhahood! Fortunately for me Allahabad is within the prescribed limit.

Another Buddhist monk made strenuous attempts to convert me to Buddhism and flooded me with essays and long letters. In one of them he congratulated me on my determination to stop manufacturing children (I do not know that I had made any such announcement) and called people who produced children 'murderers', for must not the child grow up and die? A curious outlook on life.

We saw plenty of Chinese people in Burma and visited a Chinese school. I was greatly impressed by the smart children and the way they sang a national Chinese song to the accompaniment of a children's band. They gave me the impression of a virile race determined to make good. How charming Chinese children are.

Burmese parties always seem to have an entertainment thrown in—usually professional dancing and singing, sometimes some kind of juggling or balancing feats. I liked the dancing for a while and then it grew monotonous. The dancers were the very pictures of Burmese dolls and sculptured figures we had seen previously.

We met the daughter of King Thibaw²—she had lived the greater part of her life at Ratnagiri in exile and spoke Marathi far better than

2. (1858-1916); last king of Burma; his protection of anti-British refugees from India and his resistance to British commercial infiltration led to the Third Burmese War (1885-86) and his deportation to India where he died.

Burmese, also Hindustani. A curious figure, full of her grievances over the jewels &c. which the British took away.

And now to bed. When will I see you next, my dear? I miss you so much.

Love

Yours,
Jawahar

I sent you my programme. This will have to be altered somewhat. We leave Malaya on June 5th—reach Rangoon June 8th—leave immediately for Calcutta stopping *en route* at Akyab and Chittagong. Reach Calcutta probably on June 12th. I want Indu examined there by some doctors, so we might stay in Calcutta for a day or two.

31. To Padmaja Naidu¹

s.s. Karagola
7-6-37

My dear, Within a few hours, early tomorrow, we shall reach Rangoon. Our month of wandering is over and we are hurrying back. It will take another week before we reach Calcutta for we are going *via* Akyab and Chittagong. From Chittagong, I have recently learnt to my surprise, that we shall have to go by train to Calcutta, reaching there on the 13th evening.

I want news of you but there is none, and when I shall get it I do not know. I feel a little tired after all this travelling about though I am much fitter than I was. Our travelling was done in style—no third class or rickety old Ford cars. Expensive motors or aeroplanes or air-conditioned railway cars. The air-conditioned car presented me with a new cold. For at every station I had to leave it and go out into the hot sun and the change was not pleasant. I sneezed almost every time and by the end of the day was in the grip of a violent cold.

Soon I shall be back to my own level in travelling &c. and this pleasant trip has already become a memory. A memory which has had a marked effect on my mind for it has turned it eastwards more. The Far East has become a vivid patch although I hardly crossed the threshold to it.

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

Write to me to Allahabad. Do not carry out your threat not to write.
My love to you,

Yours,
Jawahar

32. To Padmaja Naidu¹

30-6-37

My dear one, your letter came three or four days ago and, need I say that it was very welcome? No, I was not at all angry with you, if I may use the ugly word which you have written, for not writing to me for so long. Vaguely I hoped to get a letter from you somewhere during my travels and when I came back the hope grew stronger. And yet at the back of my mind I seemed to feel that you would not write to me soon. I resigned myself to this regretfully, perhaps with a slight feeling of irritation occasionally, but it was nothing much. Why did I feel so, I mean why did I expect you not to write? I do not quite know. Perhaps I am beginning to have a faint understanding of a woman's mind. I am so dull in this respect, so frightfully ignorant, as you, my dear, know so well. But even the dull in mind sometimes have a glimpse as through a glass darkly. And so the realisation came to me that you might find it a little difficult to write to me. I saw the horror in your eyes when you realised how my correspondence was dealt with by others. As a rule your letters reach me unopened, but of course the censors at the post office cannot be denied their peeps into my correspondence. It is irritating to be spied upon, though I have grown used to it and do not very much care. But, apart from this, it is often difficult to write, difficult to put down many things that one might say, as it is difficult to say all that one thinks. I write a large number of letters every day, business letters or semi-personal letters. But the letters I care about often remain unwritten for days. They hang about in my mind and I wait for a particular mood or leisure to write unhurriedly. To write to you sometimes seems so difficult, sometimes so easy. For you are the easiest and yet the most difficult person to write to. I love to think of you and often I yearn for your presence, and then my mind plays about with the idea of writing to you and phrases troupe through

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

my mind and add words and notions and just mere nothings which yet have a significance for me and may have some meaning for you. The letters that I have written to you on the tablet of my mind and not transcribed on paper!

And so I grow slowly, too slowly, in patience and understanding, and though I know nothing, or next to nothing, about women, East or West, the individual human being interests me even as an individual and always there is an attempt to find out what lies behind that mask of his. But I cannot apply that objective method, try as I will, to persons who move me greatly. I would not dare to do so with you for the very attempt would confound me and confuse my mind and trouble me. Your dear smiling eyes would look down upon me with amused affection and a slightly contemptuous tolerance at my stupidity.

So write to me or not as it pleases you. Do not force yourself to write because you feel I demand it. I wait for your letters and the sight of one gives me a thrill, but if they do not come, I shall not wholly fail to understand.

Do not worry about me. I am keeping pretty well in mind and body. I am physically fitter than I was two months ago and mentally refreshed to some extent. But how can I rid myself of the tangle that life is, of the unceasing complications that surround me? As I grow older, the vastness and complexity of these problems, the stupidity and inertness of human material, the purposelessness of life as a whole, the cruelty and hatred of man for man, fill my mind more. They do not suppress me but they do take away a great deal from the fresh and optimistic approach of growth. But I am hardened to this and it does not affect my activity much, or so I think. When I compare myself, hard and weather-beaten, to your dear self, soft and delicate and over-sensitive, I wonder at the difference. It is true that I feel weary at times and lonely often, but that is nothing new. I am not likely to cry out because of all this, I hardly permit myself to think of it much. So do not worry.

Ever since my return I have had to face an accumulation of work and I have worked hard. When evening comes I am tired and my brain is jaded. After a brief respite I start again, always trying to catch up. What a race it is! I have got rid of the arrears more or less but there are so many things that I want to do which hover about in my mind and find no escape. I should have liked to write about Burma & Malaya and other subjects. I doubt if I shall do so.

Thank you for the *Glimpses* — What an enormous lot of trouble you have taken over it. I took the first volume with me but had little time for it. So far I have gone through just under 300 pages.

I shared your surprise when I saw Magnus Hirschfield's book². This was in a Rangoon bookshop and as I opened it the first thing that I saw was my picture. Of course my vanity induced me to buy it.

I am off tomorrow to Wardha. After that I do not quite know what I shall do. I am not fixing up anything. Probably early in August I shall accompany Indu to Calcutta to have her tonsils removed.

Goodbye, my darling

Jawahar

2. *Women—East and West.*

33. **To Padmaja Naidu¹**

6-8-37

My dear, My dear, I have been wanting to write to you for so long, yet somehow it does not come off. I feel more distracted and worried than I usually do. The burdens of the President grow heavy and so many additional responsibilities of a novel kind have been thrust upon me that I gasp for breath. It is not just the heaviness of the work, although it is heavy, but the new problems which distract. So I have not written for I did not wish to write unless the mood was better.

But now I write these few lines hurriedly from time stolen in office, to inform you that I have at the last moment almost decided to take Indu to Bombay for her operation. Partly this is your doing, partly the fact that Betty will be there to look after her in case I have to go away. We reach Bombay on Monday morning the 9th August. I imagine the operation will take place on Wednesday. I shall be in Bombay for six or seven days and shall go to Wardha for the Working Committee from there. If Indu is still in Bombay I shall return to take her back to Allahabad.

Indu is likely to sail from Bombay on Sept. 11th.

Thank you for the two books. *The Story of Burma* I nearly bought in Rangoon—I had previously purchased its companion volume. After some thought I decided that the book was too expensive. The other book had already reached me from your friends, the artists, direct.

As for the Ajanta frescoes, if you insist on spoiling me, do so by all means. But I have ascetic moods when I want to get rid of the paraphernalia around me. But then there are pagan moods too. Anyway

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

you are the best judge of a suitable picture. Perhaps I have enough of Bodhisattvas around me and an Ajanta beauty might be presented to my pagan self.

My love to you, darling one.

Jawahar

34. To Padmaja Naidu¹

Allahabad
Sept. 29, 1937

Beebe — Have you only now realised what a fearful handicap it is to be well brought up? To do what you do not want to do, not to do what you long to do; to hear one's own voice unendingly till one is weary of it and almost begins to hate it, and yet not to say what one has to say, to repress oneself till one is fit to burst; to meet almost all the dull and uninteresting people of the world and to dream of others who are far away, beyond reach; to look pale and detached when fire rages inside one; to want to kiss soft lips but yet to keep away from them; to yearn to embrace and yet to keep your arms away till they ache. Or, there are so many things which good breeding brings in its train. You know them, you who are so well-bred. But who told you that I had been well brought up? You presume to know me a little and yet mislead yourself. Neither the governess, nor Harrow, nor Cambridge, nor anything else has taught me good breeding and I am a savage at heart caught and made a prisoner in the mesh of circumstance. From my exalted perch I envy others who are freer.

You dare to accuse me of not writing to you! Yet I would have written if I had not been continuously on the move. I returned yesterday, very tired, more so mentally than physically. When I came back from the office and had my solitary tea, I could not do anything and my mind was ill at ease. At last I got hold of Blum's book on marriage and started reading it. But interesting as it was, it could not hold me and I fell asleep and slept till dinner time.

Today I felt a little better. But I am stale, flat, and I carry on just like a machine. I read your letter again this evening and suddenly I felt like writing that long promised article on the 'Rashtrapati,² for I

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 8, pp. 520-523.

wanted to find out how much of good or bad breeding there was in him. As I sat at dinner, words and phrases passed through my mind. But breeding, or whatever it is, came in the way, and I wrote instead a note on power alcohol and other ways of utilizing molasses — 15 foolscap pages for the proper education of our Prime Ministers. And then another note on the price of sugarcane. It was 1 a.m. when I finished and the 'Rashtrapati' could not be analysed at that hour. But I had to write to you — have I not been told that letters must be answered the same day?

I expect to be here for about 10 days, except for a brief visit to Lucknow in between. Then I go to the Punjab for 3 days and Peshawar &c. 3 days. A brief stay in Allahabad and later Calcutta for the Working Committee and the A.I.C.C. I might go to Assam from Calcutta.

When will I see you, my dear? It is ages and ages since we met. And you have become so damned well-bred and yet you dare to accuse me of it.

Love,

Jawahar

Put 'Personal' on the envelope when you write to me. This might save it from the office.

35. To Padmaja Naidu¹

Allahabad

24-10-37

My dear, I am just passing through Allahabad — soon I have to go to the station. But I cannot go without writing a few lines to you. Your letter of the 17th met me here. It is bad enough to mess up one's own life occasionally but it is terrible to mess up other lives. Yet such is life and we are helpless victims of circumstances. You know well how lacking in understanding and perception I am so far as individuals are concerned, and the nearer the individual is to me the more I fail in this. Your letter has made me realise this more than ever for it has

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

shown how little I realised what was passing in your mind. I wondered greatly at the time at many things. I could not understand them. I suppose I am too self-centred to get the proper perspective. Forgive me. But even forgiveness does not help much. Help me to understand. Need I tell you that I would do anything to prevent sorrow crossing your path and yet, as you see, I become the instrument of causing you great suffering and anguish. You do not think that I do so with deliberate intent? Tell me what to do to avoid hurting you. Shall I stop writing to you and keep away from seeing you? You realise, do you not?, what a slave I am to circumstance. As I said in the article, those who ride a tiger cannot dismount. Perhaps I shall end up inside the tiger. Forgive me, my dear, I am so unhappy at the thought of your unhappiness. If I could erase myself from your memory I would gladly do so, though it would not be pleasant. That might perhaps give you peace of mind. Why not think of me as I am — full of conceit and full of myself, callously unaware of what I do to others. It is not a lovely picture but it is nearer the truth than the imaginary picture in most minds.

My love to you,

Jawahar

36. To Padmaja Naidu¹

Allahabad

5-11-37

Dear, I am writing to you without your express permission. But then you have not told me not to and a letter of yours awaits reply. Not that I am replying to it. I just feel like writing to you a few lines before I leave Allahabad again. The Assam tour was suddenly postponed for no sufficient reason and I am rather sorry for it. Cawnpore labour troubles grow serious and I was supposed to charm them away. The desire to jump into trouble and the conceit that I might make a difference drew me to them. And so tomorrow I am going there for three days. I shall be pottering about the U.P. for the rest of the month, partly in Allahabad. The first half of December I intend spending in Assam.

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

The *Modern Review* article appeared just the day before I left Calcutta. It was interesting to watch people's reactions and I felt like a guilty person. I am not used to this kind of subterfuge and I feel uncomfortable. Bapu was keen on finding out who wrote it. Bidhan was sure it was a manoeuvre to get Subhas in. He said he would know who the author was soon. One wise criticism was that I could not be a dictator because I was too much of a humanist. Is it so? I think it is true, however, that I am not made for dictatorship. Temperamentally I am not fitted for the job. But reading the article again I felt it was rather good and really true, in so far as it went. But partly untrue because it did not go far enough. The mere fact that I wrote it militates against the argument running through it. Do you not think so?

As I was leaving Calcutta I was asked when I was going to Assam. I said next month if I am still alive. It was a casual remark without any meaning but when protest was made, I began to think about it. I was a little surprised to realise how little I cared whether I lived or died. I was almost totally indifferent to life or death. And yet I live intensely enough so far as my activities are concerned.

You need not have written about Syed Hossain² as I would have had no objection to meeting him. I had an hour's talk with him.

Love,

Jawahar

2. (1887-1949); editor of *The Independent*; Chairman, Committee for India's Freedom, Washington; taught for many years at the University of Southern California; India's Ambassador to Egypt, 1947-49.

37. To Padmaja Naidu¹

Allahabad

8-11-37

My darling, Your letter, forwarded from Calcutta, reached me today on my return from Cawnpore. How we succeed in hurting each other and in doing or saying the wrong thing — at least I do. Do you not know how I long to see you? And I shall take every opportunity to see you and I shall write to you, so long as you do not tell me not to.

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

But that letter that you wrote to me suddenly made me realise, as I had not realised before, how I had become a terrible nuisance to you and how I was interfering with your life. The account that you gave of the period last year when we met in Bombay and Pondicherry, and how you had avoided me, and yet fate had thrown us together and upset your plans, hit me hard. I felt guilty and unhappy at the sorrow I had caused you and my own lack of perception appalled me. I dared not trust to my own judgement and I put it to you, who are so much wiser than I am in such matters, to tell me what to do. I may not be strong enough to act contrary to my own inclinations and urges, but if issued a mandate I would obey. Hence my letter to you. How many months it is since we met — it seems an age. And always I have been thinking when I shall see you again and hoping that perhaps I might suddenly and unexpectedly find you with a welcome in your eyes. We are frank enough to each other at times, and yet we are curiously reticent and succeed in giving wrong impressions. And then our imaginations build great structures on this frail foundation. When we meet next time — we will meet many times? — let us do away with this imaginary basis and see each other as we are. Is that too difficult? Perhaps it is not easy, but it is worth a trial. Write to me, my dear.

The Bijnor election and the tremendous victory of the Congress has let loose the most violent and unseemly language and behaviour on the part of some of the Muslim Leaguers.² In their anger they are saying things which are incredible and are openly inciting to violence and even murder in the name of Islam. Jinnah seems to have gone to pieces and what he said at Bijnor would have been surprising even in Shaukat Ali. Others, like Zafar Ali Khan, behave like dangerous lunatics. But what has pained me most is the recent incident at Aligarh University where the great majority of the students forgot all decency and responded to Zafar Ali's appeal after his own fashion³ — I am afraid we are in for a lot of trouble.

I came back today from Cawnpore. The trouble there is kept in check. My visit did some good.

My love to you, darling one.

Yours,
Jawahar

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 8, pp. 20 and 191.

3. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 8, p. 196.

38. To Padmaja Naidu¹

Allahabad
Nov. 18, 1937

My dear, So you are determined to be strong-willed and hard-hearted. It is very unlike you, and anyway why should you? Life is difficult and tragic enough, why should we make it harder by adopting tragic roles? I do not want to and I am sure you do not want to. How terribly near you are all the time to me since the Ajanta Princess has come and taken possession of my room. Why is it that I think of you whenever I look at it?

I have come back to Allahabad for two days. First news on arrival: Zohra Ansari has given birth to a baby, Rup's husband Hariharnath Vanchoo (Rup is Mohan Lal Nehru's daughter) died last night, strikes in 3 schools and colleges, great communal tension in the city because a number of *goondas* have fallen out and are fighting each other for purely personal reasons. And so leaving all my work I have to wander about the city, and then I accompany the funeral procession and walk miles in the hot sun. I am tired and have a headache and all the day's work remains undone. But it is beyond my capacity anyway to tackle it and my sense of responsibility is decreasing. It is far pleasanter to write to you.

How old are you now? Twenty? Oh, my dear, how infantile we are even though the years steal over us. How I long to see your dear face.

Yours,
Jawahar

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

39. To Padmaja Naidu¹

Assam-Bengal Rly.
Tinsukhia to Lumding
Dec. 4, 1937

My dear, I have finished my tour of the Valley of the Brahmaputra — eight hectic days — and now I am going to the Surma Valley. I am travelling in pomp and splendour in a first class compartment reserved

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

all for myself. Why so? Because the railway authorities think this is more fitting for a President of the Congress. The Agent of the railway has issued directions that whatever the class of the ticket I hold, I must be accommodated in a first class. (I might mention that this railway has no second class. It has only first, inter and third.) Loving comfort and the soft and pleasant things of life as I do, I succumbed to the temptation. It came rather unexpectedly the first time, as I was getting into a train with an inter class ticket. I was tired and the journey was not a long one. So I rolled myself up on the 1st class berth and fell asleep. Today I had sufficient notice and the journey was a long one. I disliked the idea of being beholden to the railway company and so I have had to buy a first class ticket. What petty excuses we find to avoid the strait and narrow path of virtue!

I have liked this visit and liked Assam. I have gone up and down it pretty thoroughly and yet, curiously enough, I have not visited Shillong, which is supposed to be the jewel of Assam. Going there meant giving up some outlying places and I preferred the latter. Also I wanted to stress the fact that my real business lay with the peasants and workers and tribal folk and not with the big people who live on the mountain top. Subconsciously I was put off by a railway advertisement which described Shillong as the Scotland of the East. I am not frightfully keen on the real Scotland and certainly an imported article does not attract me. Conceit, of course.

But I have mixed in high society also, been invited to the European planters' club, met them at their homes, fed with the bosses of the Assam Oil Co. and tried hard to be pleasant and sociable to European women. The desire to impress and be well thought of by all and sundry, I suppose.

Three days now in the Surma Valley and then a long long journey to Saharanpur where a Muslim by-election demands my presence. It will take another nine days before I reach Allahabad.

How are you, my dear? I famish for news of you and how I long to see you, to hold you and to look into your eyes.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

This first class reserved compartment is not as conducive to rest as it might be. At every wayside station there is a shouting crowd of tea garden employees and others.

40. To Padmaja Naidu¹Lucknow
2-3-1938

My dear, Your telegram has reached me. How foolish and womanlike and extravagant. Or was it a kind of *prayashchitta* or atonement for having made love to Subhas? Do you expect a tough person like me, overflowing with energy and vitality, more than is becoming at my age, to fade off because of a cold? The length of years that lie before me frighten me at times. I weary at the prospect of them.

You made me promise to write to you. Foolish one, as if a promise was needed, or as if a promise means anything. Would you have me write to you just to keep that promise even though the desire was lacking? And could you prevent me from writing, short of commanding me to do so and my believing in your command, if the desire to write to you moved me? I shall write to you, as I have written in the past, even when you have not replied. For I write, selfish and self-centred as I am, to please myself, though in my vanity I imagine that I might be giving you some pleasure also. You will not write to me, you tell me, lest you say something which might hurt. A word of yours has power to hurt, but have you thought of the pain of having no word from you? Have you thought of the loneliness that is my life, of the shell in which I live, encompassed and cut off, and from which I seek escape in activity?

You know me better perhaps than I do myself, yet I have some knowledge of myself also. I know well how true it was when you said that I never give anyone what I receive. It was not perhaps the whole truth but it was certainly the truth. I am too self-centred, too individualistic to give much, the bars of my temperament keep me prisoner. And so I can never enter the gates of the earthly paradise which open only to those who can give unreservedly.

Perhaps that very failing has become a virtue in me in the public sense. For so I can go through life more unattached than I might otherwise be. This sense of unattachment grows within me, though life often beckons to me and I have no wish to say no to it. I touch it and I like its touch, and I think of it and the memory pleases me, yet somehow I remain an outsider. It may be that what capacity I had to give, I gave intensively, not to individuals but in other ways, and I am bankrupt now, or perhaps a debtor mortgaged up to the hilt. I shall never get rid of that burden of debt.

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

Yesterday fifty thousand kisans marched up to Lucknow. I was tired and resting but I went off to them and spoke to them for a while, and then walked about among them. I think I did manage to forget myself while I was with them. They were a miserable lot with sorrow-laden eyes, many with bent backs, old and decrepit, and I wondered what force had made them drag their wretched bodies through many miles of dusty roads. I returned tired in body but vitalised. Did I draw this vitality from these sinking specimens of humanity?

Please do not worry about me. I really am getting on quite well and I expect to be normal in another two days. I shall be in Lucknow for another day or possibly two. There is no point in my staying here longer. The longer I stay here, the more I delay going to Khali. I want to leave for Khali on the 9th and to stay there nearly a fortnight. If I delay going there my stay will be shortened. I have had myself examined by a doctor here and he has passed me as fit except for the remains of a cold.

Nan has read to me a part of your letter to her relating to Subhas. I think it is disgraceful how you turn people's heads. Do you propose to collect the scalps of Congress Presidents? But no. Be kind to him and loving. Soften him and make him more human. I like him very much and I think that most people judge him harshly because of certain mannerisms and affectations.

Did you ask me to send for you when I wanted you? How penetrating you are. My dear, do you expect me to be sending you daily telegrams? If I gave free play to my desire to see you that would be the inevitable result.

My love to you,

Yours,
Jawahar

The flowers are aflame and send you greetings.

41. To Padmaja Naidu¹

Khali
Almora
25-3-38

My dear, There is no news of you or from you. Of course you warned me. But I shall continue to grouse. My time here is almost up and

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

soon I shall be going down. The two weeks have done me a deal of good and I am feeling very fit and full of vitality. I would have felt better still if news from outside had not come to trouble my peace of mind. There was the Austrian affair.² I had hardly reconciled myself to it when news of the communal rioting at Allahabad came and upset me. A colleague was almost fatally stabbed there and the whole affair was very distressing. A few deaths or broken heads do not matter much but the whole background is terribly painful.

Mridula & Bharati have been here a week. Mridula is quite an exceptional girl with enormous capacities for work. She has been wearing herself down by over-work in an atmosphere which does not suit her. She cannot fall in line completely with the Gujarat bosses and friction results. She has benefited greatly by her stay here. Bharati is an interesting girl and her naivete and frankness and preoccupations with personal problems are very refreshing. They are staying on here for three weeks after my departure.

I have at last managed to send a revised copy of Vol. 1 of the *Glimpses* to London. Your corrections were of the greatest help. But one series of corrections which you made I have not adopted. Usually I describe past events in the present tense—You have invariably changed this to the past tense. I think the present is preferable as it makes history more vital for the reader and writer. As a matter of fact whenever I have written about past events I have tried to think of them as the present and imagined myself witnessing them.

I shall be going to Calcutta *via* Lucknow and Allahabad.

Love

Yours,
Jawahar

2. Germany annexed Austria in March 1938.

42. To Padmaja Naidu¹

Allahabad
7-4-38

My dear, I returned from Calcutta and found your letter. The accusation in it was entirely unwarranted for I have been keeping you informed of my plans, such as they are. Do you still get your facts from the

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

Urdu press? But for once I must be thankful to this press for it has induced you to write to me. I am still thinking in terms of sailing for Europe in mid-June. I shall probably decide finally by the end of this month. Unless some extraordinary development takes place in India or Europe I shall stick to this date. There is a very faint possibility of my going earlier if I am suddenly wanted at the other end. But this is difficult anyhow as passages are not usually available prior to the monsoon.

I am sending these few lines to you in some haste in order to catch you in Hyderabad before you leave. You have given me no address. I am so sorry that the 'Golden Threshold'² is changing hands.

I am physically fit and well. But more and more, I feel a misfit in the political scene. I carry on through sheer habit and habit is strong enough to carry me through with a measure of success. But I have lost my self-assurance. I have developed a strong distaste for conferences and public gatherings, not that I dislike them but because I really do not know what to say. Or to be more accurate there is a conflict in my mind between what I want to say and what I ought to say. Do you know the lines³ of Alfred de Musset on sadness:

J'ai perdu ma force et ma vie,
Et mes amis et ma gaiete,
J'ai perdu jusqu'a la fierte
Qui faisait croire a mon genie.

Quand j'ai connu la Verite,
J'ai cru que c'etait une amie,
Quand je l'ai comprise et sentie,
J'en etais deja degoute.³

Sometimes my mood turns that way. And yet not always. But I have become more of an enquirer, a searcher for I know not what. An American publisher wants me to write an essay on my philosophy of life. For financial and other reasons I am attracted by this proposal. But then I wonder—have I any philosophy at all?

2. Name of Sarojini Naidu's house in Hyderabad.

3. I have lost my strength and my life,
And my friends and my gaiety,
I have lost even the pride
That made me believe in my genius.
When I knew Truth,
I thought it was a friend,
When I understood and felt it,
I was already disgusted by it.

I must now go off to some remote corner of the city to address a meeting to promote communal unity. There is still much fear and trouble under the surface. What a bad lot we are.

I shall be in Allahabad throughout April unless I go to Lucknow or somewhere else for a day or two.

Love,

Jawahar

43. To Padmaja Naidu¹

Allahabad

11-4-38²

8 p.m.

My dear, You are unhappy and I feel greatly distressed. I wish I could come to Lucknow but I am completely tied up here. There was a bust-up today again and the position is bad. All day I have been wandering about, being cheered occasionally, cursed at sometimes, and everywhere being overwhelmed with complaints. It will pass as everything in life passes but it is an exhausting and depressing business nonetheless. I propose to go to Lucknow on the 23rd night. I have to be back in the city for an evening round. In haste.

Love

Jawahar

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. The date 11-8-38 given in the source is evidently a slip for 11-4-38.

44. To Padmaja Naidu¹

Gloucester

25.6.38

Bebie dear, I have spent eleven days in Europe—five in Spain, three in Paris, nearly two in London. I am now on a week-end visit with Indu

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

to Sir Stafford Cripps in his country home. We return tomorrow night to London.

These days have been terribly busy days and I have been quite unable to write to anyone in India. Nor have I had any news from India except a letter from Nan. A letter from you also came but this had been originally sent to Bombay and forwarded from there.

The visit to Spain—Barcelona—was full of interest and the most vivid impressions. Every night we woke up to the sound of bombing from the air and anti-aircraft guns in action. We rushed out to our balcony on the sixth floor of the hotel and watched this spectacle of modern civilisation. It was impressive enough if one could forget the tragedy underlying it. We could not see the enemy planes as they flew at a tremendous height, about 20000 ft., but we could hear the noise of their engines. The searchlights played all over the sky and the anti-aircraft guns seemed to hurl coloured lights in the sky. Next morning we enquired about the damage done—casualties, houses smashed to bits &c. Still the city carried on its normal life and crowds filled its streets. The shops functioned, the theatres and cinemas were full, high class musical concerts were being given. A book fair was being held and the streets were full of stalls. It was astounding to see this normality and the calmness and order that prevailed everywhere. Perhaps human beings can get accustomed to almost anything. But probably it was not just *insouciance*, it was also sheer courage and pride for the Spaniard is a proud animal. Anyway it was most impressive. I cannot conceive how a people like this can be crushed ultimately even if they cannot hold out in a military sense.

I met many people—cabinet ministers, military officers, trade union officials, civil servants and the rank & file of the army. I met also Pasionaria, the remarkable Spanish woman who has become the idol of the people. She was the most overwhelming woman I have met. Middle-aged, homely-looking, with a large family, she was full of suppressed passion and vitality which simply oozed out of her.

There were privations and food was scarce though the stage of actual starvation had not been reached. There was no milk or butter except for children. We had limited rations even in our hotel. Cigarettes were not to be had and this was perhaps the severest strain on many. An anti-aircraft gun officer told me that he had hardly slept for four days and nights and begged me for a cigarette. The tragedy was that I had none.

We saw a lovely children's home where refugees were kept. There were scores of such homes and children's restaurants where free meals

were provided. Everywhere we found an indomitable will to persevere and not to give in.

I expect to be in England till July 17th and then to go to Paris for a week. After that possibly Switzerland, Czechoslovakia, Vienna, and may be Turkey. Returning to Geneva and England. If all goes well I take the return journey to India *via* Russia & Central Asia.

I am afraid I could not enclose in my last letter to you from on board a copy of my note to Kripalani as I said I would.² I find that I had no copy left. I sent a copy to Nan. Perhaps you could get one from her.

I must go now to the village trade union committee who are meeting to have a talk with me.

Love

Yours,
Jawahar

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 9, pp. 7-8.

45. To Padmaja Naidu¹

London
5-7-38

Bebee, It is three weeks now since I landed in Europe—or is it more? It seems ages and I have compressed quite a lot in these days. They have been terribly full. The Spanish experience was exhilarating and depressing. I wanted to write to Indu at length about it while yet it was fresh in my mind. But I have had no time at all and even personal letters remain unwritten. The other letters have a better fate for an efficient secretary—a Somerville girl knowing typing, shorthand and French—deals with them. I am writing these few lines at 2.15 a.m. when I am dog tired.

But I had to write to you, however briefly, for your long letter has just come. I have read it hurriedly, I shall read it again. It is not easy to answer it. Indeed I doubt if I can answer it fully. I am not used to discussing my personal feelings or emotions in letters. Some things might be said perhaps. It is more difficult to write about them. But anyway

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

I cannot understand what has upset you so much and made imagine all manner of things which are hidden from me. I may not come up to your mark or to your expectations. Nobody does and certainly I know very well how grossly I am over-rated by those who have a partiality for me. Perhaps you have not understood me aright in spite of your deep insight into me. I have human feelings and emotions certainly and they move me, but not for very long, for other and impersonal feelings overwhelm them.

But I cannot write to you more now as it is very late. I shall write later. Meanwhile, do not give free rein to your imagination.

Love

Jawahar

46. To Padmaja Naidu¹

Hotel Ambassador
Prague
11.8.1938

Bebec dear, I have not written to you for an age. Indeed except for the last few days I have hardly written letters since I reached Europe. I have led a hard life since I landed in Genoa and a day full of engagements has ended late at night when I felt too tired to write. Some days in Spain, about 10 days in Paris and four weeks in London were spent thus. And then I forced myself to take a week by the sea-side in France where Indu accompanied me. There was not too much rest there as I was busy writing some reports. Still I slept sufficiently and had sea bathing. I started off from there going east, visited Munich & am now at Prague—with Indu. This business of travelling on the Continent is terrible. Hours and hours are spent in getting tickets & reservations, visas &c. Then packing & unpacking. I find this very trying. In England & France I know my way about more or less, the language is within control and there are many friends to help. Not so elsewhere.

I expect to be here for a week or so—not at Prague but in Czechoslovakia. Then we go to Vienna & Budapest and possibly Istanbul, returning to Switzerland nearly in September. What I shall do after that I do not know yet.

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

Day after tomorrow we visit the Bata factory. It is far from here and we shall go there by one of Bata's private planes. Then we visit the great Skoda munitions works. But the main object of our visit is to study the Sudeten minority problem.

Nan wrote to me that you had not been well. I hope you have recovered. I do not know where you are but I suppose this letter will reach you *via* Hyderabad.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

47. To Padmaja Naidu¹

Budapest
1.9.38

Bebec dear, For nearly two weeks I have been here, tied down because of Indu's illness. Nan also got stuck up here. Now that Indu is much better, we are leaving today by air for London. Nan went yesterday as she is stopping for a day in Prague. She will join us there on our way to London.

Central Europe is a seething cauldron, especially Czechoslovakia. As I look at these beautiful cities I wonder how long they will survive. Almost their doom seems to be written in the skies.

I have no idea about my future programme. The proposed visit to Russia seems to be off. Indu's illness will also affect my movements. For the present I go to London and perhaps a week later to Geneva.

I hope you are well

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

48. To Pierre Cot¹

Paris
September 21, 1938

Dear Monsieur Cot,²

I have just reached Paris, coming by air from Geneva. The international crisis and the threats of war have distressed me greatly as, no doubt, they are distressing you. But howsoever great our distress might be, we cannot remain passive spectators of the tragedy that is being enacted before our eyes. As a great organisation devoted to peace and collective security, the R.U.P.³ has a special duty to stand by its principles when they are brutally attacked. Not to do so means almost the extinction of the R.U.P.

I went to Geneva in the hope that a meeting of the International Executive of the R.U.P. would be held then and I would have the opportunity of attending it and discussing the critical problems that face us with our colleagues of the R.U.P. My colleague, Mr. Krishna Menon, had already suggested such a meeting. Unfortunately no such meeting could be held. It is for this reason that I am writing to you, for I fear that if the R.U.P. cannot function when the need for this is greatest, it will never function at all and most of us will cease to take interest in it. During the past three months and a half, that I have been in Europe, no meeting of the Executive has been held and there have been no opportunities for full consultation amongst ourselves.

The present grave crisis involving terrible danger of war forces us to act in accordance with our basic programme and principles. The exact attitude which we should take is not easy of decision and requires the most careful thought. But to take no decision at all is itself a betrayal of our principles.

It is perfectly clear that the proposals of the British and French Governments regarding Czechoslovakia⁴—proposals made without even consulting the country and people most concerned—are a death-blow to the ideals we have proclaimed. They are not proposals to avoid war.

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. Pierre Cot (1895-1977); French politician; before the Second World War was a leader of the Radical Socialist Party and helped to organise Leon Blum's Popular Front Regime in 1936; Minister of Aviation, 1933-34 and 1936-37 and Minister of Commerce and Industry in 1938; headed a small leftist progressive party after the Second World War.

3. *Rassemblement Universel pour la Paix* (World Peace Congress).

4. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 9, p. 143.

but to create a situation in which war will always be on the doorstep and gangsterism will reign supreme in Europe. Perhaps there are few examples in history of a greater betrayal of a friendly people and an allied nation. Public immorality, force and threat of force are now acknowledged to be the foundations of national and public policy. This can only lead to the most terrible of disasters.

It seems to me that the R.U.P. must clearly condemn this policy and the Franco-British proposals. It must demand that settlements must not be made under threats of force. It must insist that the Czechoslovakian Government be fully consulted and its agreement obtained. The present position taken up by the Czech Government asking for arbitration under treaty terms is an eminently reasonable one. This attitude involves our condemning the French and British Governments and demanding a change. Further that if there is any aggression in Czechoslovakia, the aggressor nations must be declared as such and treated as such.

May I add also that the banning of public meetings and demonstrations at this juncture is a dangerous and unwarranted interference with civil liberty and democratic procedure. It is not for an outsider to suggest any action, but it is obvious that our activities can be very greatly obstructed by this official banning of meetings, etc.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

49. To Padmaja Naidu¹

London
20-10-1938

Bebie dear, I have had no news of you, or hardly any news for a long time. And now I am packing up and collecting together all my little bits that have gone to pieces, to return to India. This visit to Europe has not been a vitalizing experience. Apart from the worry due to Indu's & Nan's ill-health, events in Europe have shaken me up completely. This continent is going to the Devil with extreme rapidity.

Indu is returning with me. She is fairly well now but she cannot go back to Oxford this winter and so she might as well come to India for a few months. She can return in spring.

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

We are leaving London on the 24th Oct. After brief halts in Paris & the Riviera we sail from Marseilles on Nov. 1 reaching Alexandria on the 6th. On the 9th Nov. we sail from Port Said by the P.& O.S.S. *Strathnaver* reaching Bombay on Nov. 17th.

Nan has been ill again but I hope she will recover soon. She is now leaving by air on Nov. 9th & reaching Allahabad on the 13th.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

50. To Stafford Cripps¹

Khali
Jan. 21, 1939

My dear Cripps,

I am sorry for the delay in answering your letter. I have carried it about with me for the last three weeks during my wanderings hoping to find time to write to you at some leisure. It is astonishing how much time one has to spend in travelling in this country. A committee meeting might mean a journey of anything from five hundred to a thousand miles and thus back again.

I have now escaped for a week and have come to the mountains where my daughter has been staying. Your last letter was written in unusual surroundings—from the Court of Justice. My reply is being written in a far more unusual way. I am at present having a sunbath in full view of the Himalayan snows, and some of the highest peaks of the Himalayas look down upon me from a distance of a few miles, as the crow flies.

I have been reading *The Tribune* regularly except when I am in too remote a place for it to reach me. I think it has improved greatly and become very readable. I am glad it is going up in circulation.

The idea of having a pamphlet club attached to the Left Book Club is attractive. I wish we could do something of the kind here but for the present we seem to lack both the business capacity and effective writers. Most of our ardent politicians are no good at business and most of our writers have a tendency to sectarianism which prevents them from getting a wide enough audience. For the present the daily paper with which

1. British Cabinet Papers, CAB 127/57, Public Record Office, London

I am connected is enough (or more than enough!) of a burden on me and it worries me.

The real difficulty however in pushing any series of books and pamphlets lies deeper. What line are we to take up which is sound and yet which carries the mass of nationalist opinion or Congress opinion here? Conflicts and cleavages are developing in our ranks, though they are not so deep yet as to cause a vital split. I do not quite know where I stand myself. Being a member of the Congress Executive at the top I have to keep in line with my colleagues, though I pull them often enough in my own direction. On some matters I disagree with them entirely. Ever since my return to India I have been more or less feeling my way and I cannot yet say how things will develop. There are some disturbing signs but on the whole I have felt better here than I did in Europe.

My effort all along has been to make the politically left elements to pull together. The Congress as a whole is definitely left politically including the old guard. But on the social issue it is not quite so clear although its sympathies are certainly towards the left. The emergence of the social issue endangers its political unity to some extent, and left elements have a way of behaving in a remarkably irresponsible manner which frightens and irritates the mass of Congressmen. There is no vital conflict on a real issue, although there are divergences. The real conflict is a psychological one—distrust and suspicion of each other. Neither side can do without the other. If the left was in charge of the Congress organisation, it could not possibly carry on or do anything effective. (I use the left in the social sense). The Centre group with the old leaders can certainly carry on without the help of the left but their effectiveness will decline. The Right group is small and does not count except when it gets the support of the Centre and Gandhi.

Thus on a political issue it is not difficult to have a strong united front of the Centre & Left. I think it is possible to have such a united opposition on the Federation issue. It might have been possible, if the British Government had gone far enough, to weaken this opposition and perhaps turn down the Centre. But as things are developing it seems much more likely that Federation, if imposed, will be opposed by the Congress as a whole. Personally I still doubt that Federation will be imposed under these circumstances.

The three major questions before us are: 1. The social issue relating to the peasants & workers. Both these groups have become very much alive and under present conditions it is not possible for the Congress or the Congress ministries to meet all their demands. Much has been

done, especially in the United Provinces, but the problems are too deep-seated to be solved by superficial reforms. They require an overhaul of the social structure. The efforts of the Congress ministries to raise the standards of the workers & peasants have already begun to frighten the middle classes. There is much grumbling beneath the surface and complaints that their interests are not looked after. This is not important so far but it is out of this that fascist elements take shape. Fascism as such will not develop in India at this stage. What is more likely to happen is for these middle class elements to try to gain control of various local Congress committees and thus influence the people at the top and Congress policy generally.

The second problem before us is the Hindu-Moslem tension. This is certainly an obstruction in our path. The Muslim League is not organisationally strong. It cannot do anything positive or constructive. But it can be destructive and its entire policy consists of inciting Moslems against the Congress. The most fantastic lies are circulated and full advantage is taken of the civil liberties established by the Congress governments. It is difficult to get at the root of the matter—what the basic objection is. It almost seems that Jinnah and the other leaders of the Muslim League object to democracy itself in India for democracy means the dominance of the majority. They object to the people of the Indian states being enfranchised as this means more Hindus voting. Jinnah is really an impossible person to deal with. He has a certain lawyer's ability and enormous conceit, but otherwise he is extraordinarily ignorant.

There are tendencies in the Muslim League for a left wing to develop and to insist on a positive programme.

The third problem is that of the Indian states. As you know this has developed suddenly and on a wide scale and there is hardly a state which is not affected. This development has, I think, justified the Congress policy towards the states—This was essentially to make the states people organise and rely upon themselves rather than to expect others to carry their burdens. No mass movement could be organised from outside and without an awakening of the masses within the states little could be done. As soon as this was realised the people of the states woke up, and the Congress was inevitably dragged into the fray.

There are at present four aspects of this struggle. In some small states the rulers surrendered almost without any struggle, or were intelligent enough to read the signs of the times and to fall in line with the national movement before any effective pressure could be organised. They are only small states but their example counts. Of these states, Aundh in the Bombay Presidency has set the best example and done

so with grace.² The ruler has just inaugurated a new constitution which in effect is a kind of federation of village republics.

Then there are a few states where the struggle has been under the direction of leading Congressmen, as in Rajkot, and where a measure of success has come. Mysore last year partly came to terms under Congress pressure but it has tried to wriggle out of them since. Rajkot was a clear and definite victory but the ruler is misbehaving again and it is possible that the struggle might be resumed. Rajkot was a good instance of how the imperial Govt. interferes both directly & indirectly. When the struggle began the ruler engaged a retired British Officer as his prime minister. Soon after the ruler became frightened and wanted to come to terms with the people. Taxes were not being paid, all business was at a standstill and civil disobedience was going strong. The state treasury was empty and debts were piling up. This was the result of the repressive policy of the British minister. When the ruler wanted to come to terms, the British minister refused to permit him to do so and even threatened to get him deposed by the imperial Govt. The ruler was helpless. He tried to dismiss the minister (whom he had himself appointed a few months earlier) but the minister refused to be dismissed and had the backing of the Agent of the Govt. of India. Ultimately the ruler was forced, by the pressure of the popular upheaval, to come to terms and to dismiss the minister. Even then the minister stuck on! He left ultimately. I am sure that the Agent to the Gov. General is now trying to create fresh trouble in Rajkot.

In the Orissa states there has been open and repeated interference on the part of the Govt. of India. Troops have been sent and firing on the people has been repeatedly resorted to.³ In one state, as you must know, the British Agent fired at a crowd which therefore killed him. Since then troops from distant parts of India have been concentrated in Orissa and Ranpur (where the murder took place) has become a wilderness, almost every inhabitant of this small & backward state having run away on the approach of troops.

In Jaipur a big conflict is impending which is likely to drag in the Congress as the leader of the Jaipur movement is a very prominent Congressman, Jamnalal Bajaj.⁴ The conflict has come because the Jaipur Govt. refused to permit the popular organisation to do famine work

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 9, p. 412.

3. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 9, pp. 410-411.

4. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 9, p. 413.

in the state, although famine is ravaging large areas. The People's Association has been banned, the president of it who is a resident of Jaipur (Jammalal Bajaj) is forbidden entry into the state and every vestige of civil liberty crushed. The challenge has been accepted by Bajaj and he has given notice that he will enter Jaipur on a certain date early in February. His arrest will start the civil disobedience movement.

Who is doing this in Jaipur? Not the Maharaja who is a youth more interested in taking fresh wives unto himself than in the task of governing. He has just, I believe, married for the third time. He did so in Bombay and when a deputation of Jaipur merchants in Bombay wanted to wait on him to protest against the steps taken by his govt. he replied that he was not interested, or something to that effect. The man in command in Jaipur is an Englishman who is prime minister and he has declared that he will stand no nonsense and will crush with violence every attempt to disobey his orders, howsoever peaceful this disobedience might be.

It is extraordinary how many British officers are in charge of the Indian States as the rulers' ministers. Then there are of course the Residents and the Agents of the Gov. General and behind them all the Political Dept. of the Govt. of India. It is absolutely clear that the real struggle of the people is with the British Govt. of India and hardly with the rulers who count for little.

I have written at too great length already and I must end this letter. But I should like to mention the two major states Hyderabad and Kashmir. In both of these popular movements have developed and in both attempts are being made to crush them on the ground that they are communal movements. As it happens Hyderabad has a Muslim ruler & a Muslim bureaucracy while the population of the state is 85% Hindu. Kashmir has a Hindu ruler and mostly Hindu officials while the population of the state is 85% Muslim.

This struggle in the states is bound to have far-reaching repercussions. It will affect the question of federation and it might put an end to the Congress ministries, if the Congress as a whole gets deeply involved.

I wonder if you have given any further thought to the constitutional aspect of the states question. If so I shall be grateful if you will let me have your views. I am presiding next month over the States' People's Conference.⁵

Apologies for the length of this letter. I have not written to you about other matters which distress me greatly—the Spanish situation

5. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 9, pp. 418-431.

more particularly. What can I write? I suppose that in spite of appearances, Chamberlain is not likely to continue for long.

I must apologise to you for not having written yet to Manley⁶ in Jamaica. I would have done so from here but unfortunately I left the address in Allahabad. I shall write to him on my return.

All good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

6. Norman Manley (1893-1969); Chief Minister, 1955-59, and Prime Minister, 1959-62, of Jamaica.

51. To V.K. Krishna Menon¹

Wardha
22.2.39

My dear Krishna,

I enclose a copy of a statement I have issued to the press this evening.² Perhaps some truncated form of it might reach you by cable. The statement might surprise you and even distress you. But after very full consideration I came to the conclusion that there was no other course left open to me. The statement is a long one and yet inevitably it cannot contain many important matters which have influenced me. Subhas has gone off the rails and has been behaving badly in many ways. His principal supporters are very irresponsible and unreliable people and it is quite impossible for me to join this motley group with whose viewpoints on national and international politics I do not agree. Yet if I happened to join his Committee, all the burden would fall on me. I would be coming in continuous conflict with his policies, such as they are. Apart from principles and policies, Subhas's methods of work are difficult to put up with. He has paralysed the A.I.C.C. office and passes orders over its head in all manner of election matters and local disputes — these orders being flagrantly partial and against our rules or procedure. The Working Committee, which was to have met here,

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 9, pp. 485-487.

could not meet because he was unable to attend owing to illness and he directed us not to transact even routine business.

For me this new development has far-reaching significance. I do not propose to join any Working Committee whoever forms it — subject to a crisis overtaking us. It is quite likely that Subhas might not be able to carry on. If so the old guard might slip in. Even so I shall not join the Working Committee. I have had enough of this kind of thing. Anyway the Congress will clear up matters somewhat.

The I.P.C.³ from London has just cabled to me that the 25th February should be observed as a Spain Day for demonstrations, etc. I am afraid it is far too late to take any steps of this kind now. It takes some time to organise. Besides I do not think such demonstrations would be successful just now.

What about sending food ships to Spain? I suppose this is off for the present. We are cabling some money to the *Comite de l' Enfance* of Paris.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

3. International Peace Campaign.

52. To V.K. Krishna Menon¹

Lucknow
17.5.39

My dear Krishna,
I have been sending you letters from time to time dealing with various matters that arose. I shall continue to do so, for the mind goes on functioning through sheer habit. So also I shall carry on with my usual activities, though I realise more and more how I am losing in efficiency. But I want to tell you briefly the state of my mind. It is bad. I have lost all pep and feel devitalised, and my interest in life itself seems to be fading away. Don't be alarmed. I can still function fairly effectively and it may be that I shall recover some of my vitality. For the moment however the outlook is not encouraging. Most of the things

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

that I value and for which I have worked seem to be going to pieces, and it is not surprising that I should also disintegrate in the process. Nearly all the conceit I possessed in such ample measure has been knocked out of me. I suppose this is a gradual process and many things contribute to it. Events in India, events elsewhere. What has happened in Spain has affected me greatly as a deep personal sorrow. What has happened and is happening in India, being near to me, affects me continuously. The kind of human material that I see about me, the all-pervading pettiness and vulgarity, the mutual suspicion and back-biting and so many other things distress me beyond measure. Everywhere the wrong type of person is pushing himself to the front, everywhere disruptive forces are growing. Perhaps I exaggerate, perhaps all this is inevitable and is not peculiar to India in the present phase of the world.

It is possible that I might not have been affected by all this quite so much if I had retained my own peace of mind. Having lost that in a large measure, the shield that protected me has gone. The heat and my indifferent health make matters worse.

I wrote to you two and a half months ago that I was very ill mentally. I had received a sudden shock which upset me more than almost anything else had ever done. I was afraid of a breakdown but I avoided it and during those days of mental agony I sat down and forced myself to write those articles, *Where Are We?*² I adjusted myself gradually and became more normal. But I was too much shaken up and the after-effects continue.

I am sorry to write to you all this and to distress you. I do so to enable you to realise somewhat how I am functioning at present. Partly also to relieve myself. There is hardly anyone here to whom I can speak with frankness about myself here. But please do not worry. It is a phase which will pass perhaps.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

2. The reference is to the eight articles printed in the *National Herald* between 28 February and 6 March 1939. They were later reprinted as a pamphlet, and included in *The Unity of India* (London, 1941), pp. 86-132. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 9, pp. 488-520.

53. To V.K. Krishna Menon¹

Allahabad
August 15, 1939

My dear Krishna,

I am having some little difficulty about my passage but I suppose something will be fixed up. At the most I shall have to go by Air France from here and not by K.L.M.

I had a long cable from the Chinese Ambassador in London relayed to me by the Consul in Calcutta. In this cable he sent me his good wishes and greetings. It ended up by a curious and unexpected sentence as follows:

“Winston Churchill requests me send his
good wishes for success of your mission”

What is the world coming to?

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L.

54. To David Grenfell¹

Allahabad
Sept. 18, 1939

My dear Mr. Grenfell,

I have just received your cable on return to Allahabad. Three days ago I sent a long cable to India League giving a summary of the Congress Executive's statement on the war situation.² This must have crossed your cable. This statement must have given you a fair idea of our position. I am now enclosing a full copy of the statement.

You will notice that the statement makes it quite clear that we stand for democracy and freedom and are against fascist and Nazi aggression. We are prepared to cooperate in every way in the building up of a

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 10, pp. 139-140.

new world order. But the whole attitude and policy of the British Government in India in the past, and more specially in the recent past, has been such as to irritate Indian opinion and make it disbelieve vague professions made by the British Government. Repeatedly we have drawn their attention to our attitude in regard to a war. We have been ignored completely and action has been taken affecting India without any reference to us. In the feudal and autocratic Indian states the whole policy of the British Government has been to encourage this autocracy and misrule. Several ordinances have been passed without our consultation and India has been declared a belligerent country. In the present state of Indian opinion this has been a very great irritation. The Working Committee's statement has been worded mildly but it does give expression to some extent to this feeling in India. A strong body of Indian opinion held that in view of the attitude of the British Government the only possible course for us was to refrain from any co-operation. But we have decided not to take any hasty step and to give an opportunity to the British Government to take immediate steps to meet this difficult situation. You will observe that what we have said applies of course to India but the whole problem is viewed in a larger context of world freedom. It is thus of concern to everyone in England or in India who is interested that this War should not be allowed to become an imperialist war.

In the event of the British Government not meeting the Indian demand satisfactorily, the only possible course open to India is to withdraw all cooperation. I would regret that exceedingly. But I cannot advise any other course which is in consonance with Indian dignity as well as the cause of world freedom.

It is important that the British Government should recognise clearly India as a free and independent nation. In giving effect to this declaration certain difficulties will arise, but it is necessary that, in as large a measure as possible, immediate effect should be given to it. I am sure that we shall have the goodwill and support of all liberty-loving people in England in the course we have taken. We have all, whether we live in England or in India, a terribly difficult time to face and the future is likely to grow more and more burdensome. The only right course for all of us is to be clear as to what that future is going to be and to give effect to it in the present. For if the present is ignored the future will take revenge.

Our larger Executive, the All India Congress Committee, is meeting on the 7th October and it is important that the position should be cleared up before then, otherwise steps may be taken which it may be difficult to retrace.

I am sending the following cable to you today:—

Have already cabled a summary of Congress decision. Our policy against fascism and wholly favouring democracy but India must have democracy to defend. Important for British Government recognize India as free nation and give immediate effect to greatest possible extent.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

55. To V.K. Krishna Menon¹

Allahabad
Sept. 19, 1939

My dear Krishna,

Your letter of the 9th September has just reached me. I am cabling to you as follows: "Your letter 9th agree generally outlook suggestions."

I find myself in very great agreement with what you have written. I think that you will find that agreement reflected in the Working Committee's statement also, though that statement does not go into as much detail as your letter. I might even go so far as to say that my colleagues in the Working Committee are also looking at the problem more or less from the point of view that you have suggested, though I cannot say how far they would agree with the details. In view of this common outlook, I think you should work on this basis.

Nothing has happened here since the Working Committee's resolution. But I take it that developments will take place before very long. Presumably references are being made at the other end. It will be very unfortunate if the British Government cannot get rid of its old mentality. Time is an important factor. It would also be unfortunate if the British Government hedged and hesitated as this will inevitably lead to all manner of suspicion.

The news from Poland about Russo-German contacts is disturbing and confusing.² The first reaction is against the manifest opportunism of Russian foreign politics. Yet one cannot form a definite opinion without fuller knowledge.

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 10, p. 146.

Here in India a great deal of realisation of the issues at stake is dawning on our people. But the process is slow and on either side, the right and the left, people continue to think and to talk in terms divorced from reality. Generally speaking no attempt has been made on the part of the Government of India to take advantage of the provisions of the new Government of India Act Amending Act.³ Very drastic ordinances have been passed no doubt, but the discretion of the provincial governments has not been interfered with to any appreciable extent. In the Congress provinces therefore the ordinances are not being enforced in any large measure. Such enforcement as is taking place is chiefly in regard to profiteering. In Bengal and Punjab there has been more application of these ordinance. In Assam the Digboi oilfield has been declared a protected area, thus removing it from the provincial government's orbit. This is obviously being done with a view to conserve oil supplies. However, it is objectionable from the provincial government's point of view. There has been, as you know, a strike in Digboi which has continued for many months. The application of the ordinances to Digboi is hitting the strikers hard. The oil company has misbehaved in many ways during the past few months and the Congress has expressed its sympathy with the strikers and even gone so far as to say that in view of the oil company's attitude the lease should not be renewed. This resolution was passed two or three months back. At the same time the strikers have often taken up a foolish attitude and not taken the advice tendered to them both by us and the provincial government. Their present demand is that they should all be taken back without any victimisation. No other demand is being pressed. But the company refused to accept this.

In Cawnpore, labour troubles are brewing.⁴ Generally speaking the situation has been quiet except for a strike in one mill, the Victoria Mills. There is talk however of the strike spreading. It is possible that the government might intervene as the present demand of the workers is reasonable. They are prepared to abide by the arbitration of the Government Commissioner. The employer however (Sir J.P. Srivastava)⁵ is not agreeable to this as he apparently thinks that he has broken the strike by engaging new hands.

It is inevitable that difficult questions should arise from day to day in the working of the provincial governments under existing circumstances.

3. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 10, pp. 147 and 323.

4. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 8, p. 394.

5. (1889-1954); leading industrialist of Kanpur.

But generally speaking the attitude of the Governors and the Government of India is not to irritate the provincial governments or the Congress organisation. They behaved foolishly enough in pushing through the Government of India Act Amending Bill as well as other legislations and ordinances without any attempt to approach or gain the consent of the Congress or the provincial governments. This inevitably has put up the backs of the Congress and the people generally.

I hope you will keep in touch with me by cable and letter.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

56. To Padmaja Naidu¹

Bombay
July 1, 1940

Bebec dear, This is to introduce to you Dwarka Nath Kachru, who has been associated with the office of the States People's Conference at Allahabad for a year. I am sending him to Hyderabad to collect as much material as he can about the state—official papers, administration reports, budgets, historical background, land system, education, political movements &c. It is not his business to interfere in any way with any activity there or to advise anyone. He goes merely to gather facts with the State's Congress people. He is likely to stay in Hyderabad for ten days to a fortnight. He has already studied the subject to some extent—not much.

I hope you are well now. I was distressed to learn that the sun had proved too strong for you.

I am off to Delhi on a fool's errand.

Love,

Jawahar

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

57. To Sir Akbar Hydari¹

Allahabad
October 25, 1940

My dear Sir Akbar,

A distinguished member of the Chinese Government, Mr. Tai Chi Tao, is visiting India soon. He is likely to arrive about the end of this month by air in Calcutta and he intends spending a month in India touring in various places. Mr. Tai is a Minister and is the President of the Examination Yuan, which is one of the important departments of the Chinese Executive Government. I understand that it is his intention to visit, among other places, Ellora and Ajanta. He is a well-known Buddhist scholar. His visit is partly due to his desire to see various places in India connected historically and culturally with the Buddhist faith.

I would be very grateful to you if the Hyderabad Government accords to President Tai Chi Tao every facility and help during his visit to Ellora and Ajanta. He is likely to be accompanied by some members of his staff as well as Professor Tan Yun-Shan of the Cheena Bhawan, Visva-Bharati. He does not himself know English but he will have interpreters.

If I may suggest it without impropriety, a letter of invitation on your part might be sent to President Tai Chi Tao or, preferably, to the Chinese Consul-General in Calcutta, Mr. C. C. Huang, whose address is the Consulate General of the Republic of China, Calcutta.

Of course no such letter need be sent if you think otherwise.

I do not know the exact programme of President Tai Chi Tao's tour. As soon as this is decided, the Chinese Consul General can inform you.

With all good wishes,

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

58. To Padmaja Naidu¹

15-12-40

Bebce, I have written long notes of instructions. Please go through them and see that Upadhyaya carries out the directions given.

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L. This letter was written from Dehra Dun Jail.

There is a letter for Nan which should be given to her.

Please ask Upadhyaya to send me by money order Rs. 25/-. Also to send me another Rs. 25 in the first week of January—by the 10th or so.

Among the books that might be sent to me some time later are some travel books—Peter Fleming's and on Siam & Cambodia & which are at the bottom of the northern shelves in my room. Also Edward Thompson's poems. Also Dewey's books (the American philosopher). They are spread out somewhere. I had specially asked for *I Believe*, a symposium. This has not come.

It was good to see you. Keep growing younger & thus make up for those who grow older.

Love,

Jawahar

GLOSSARY

Alphonso	variety of mangoes
Apbhransh	corrupted form of a word
Ata	flour
Bagh	garden
Bhadon	sixth month of the Hindu calendar corresponding to August-September
Chota	younger
Darvesh	dervish
Durian	fruit grown in South East Asia
Elachi	cardamom
Gulmohar	a large tree with red flowers
Id-ul-Fitr	Muslim festival on the second day of the new moon after Ramzan, a month during which Muslims fast
Janmapatra	horoscope
Jyestha	third month of the Hindu calendar corresponding to June
Ka'ba	a place of Muslim pilgrimage in Mecca
Laddu	a sweet shaped like a ball
Laung	clove
Maktab	Urdu school
Malida	a variety of woollen cloth made in Kashmir
Mamu	mother's brother
Masi	mother's sister
Math	Hindu monastery
Murti	idol .
Mushaira	symposium of Urdu poets
Nani	mother's mother
Nyaya	Hindu system of logic
Pandal	a big tent for temporary use
Pashmina	cloth made of soft fine wool
Pera	a kind of sweetmeat made of milk
Ram Naumi	birthday of Rama
Samosa	a triangular-shaped stuffed fried snack
Saqi	one who serves wine
Shalwar	a pair of loose trousers worn by women
Tai	wife of father's elder brother
Yojana	a measure of distance, roughly five to nine miles

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